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High Voltage

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Beware of Energy Bill Scams

You get a call or a visit from someone claiming to be from your energy company. They explain that your bill is past due and threaten to shut off your service if you don't make a payment. However, you know your monthly bill was paid. Do you need to worry?

The answer is yes, but not for the reason you might think. Energy bill scams are becoming increasingly common. Scammers will use aggressive tactics, such as insisting your account is delinquent and threatening to shut off service immediately. As a customer, it can be difficult to ignore these

convincing phone calls, emails, and even home visits.

To protect yourself from scams, be on the lookout for these red flags:

- Demand for payment in unconventional ways, such as cash, bank transfer, or a check in their name
- Requests for personal information such as your social security number and bank account numbers
- The scammer has no proof of employment with your energy company and isn't wearing branded clothing or materials

In some cases, scammers will use seasonal bill spikes as an opportunity to swindle energy customers. For example, they might show up at your door with a fake promotion to help you save money. This type of fraud is most common in the summer and winter months when increased energy demand leads to higher bills, and customers may be more receptive to savings opportunities.

Follow these steps if you encounter an energy bill scam:

1. If a suspected scammer shows up at your home, lock the doors.
2. Report the suspicious activity to your local law enforcement.
3. Contact your CEL&P and explain the situation.
4. Spread the word to family, friends, and neighbors so that they don't become victims of the scam.
5. Report the scam at **StopFraud.gov**, a U.S. Department of Justice website.

Keep in mind that if your bill is in fact unpaid, CEL&P will not immediately disconnect service. First, you'll receive a bill highlighting the overdue amount. If this payment is still not received, the next step is a disconnection notice. CEL&P will give you ample time to make payments and will never use threatening tactics. With this knowledge, you can empower yourself against scammers.



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Attic Access: Closing the Door on Energy Losses

Is your attic access wasting energy? A home's attic access, whether a hatch, pull-down stairs, or knee-wall door, often goes uninsulated. This results in energy loss, increasing your utility bills and making your home less comfortable. Here are some tips to save money and improve comfort.

Attic hatch

One inexpensive and common type of attic access is referred to as a scuttle hole or attic hatch, which is simply a removable portion of the ceiling that allows entry to the attic above. A scuttle hole is commonly located in a closet or main hallway. To create the hatch, the installer should cut a plywood piece or save the ceiling drywall piece that is cut out for the hole.

To ensure a tight fit, securely fasten the trim around the hole to the ceiling and make sure that it is flat and level. An uneven base can cause air leakage. Weatherstripping can be installed either on the hatch itself or on the inside of the trim or base where the hatch rests. Adding a latch bolt will help ensure a tighter seal.

After the trim or base is aligned to seal properly, insulation should be added to the attic side of the hatch. Rigid insulated sheathing is recommended. Cut the insulated sheathing one-quarter-inch smaller than the hatch size to allow for clearance when moving the access panel.

Pull-down stairs

Pull-down stairs are another common type of attic access. The frame for the stairs fits in a rough opening and leaves a gap, much like that for a door or window, that must be sealed.

If the gap is small (less than half an inch), caulk can be used as the sealant. If you have a larger opening, non-expanding foam or backing material is

recommended in conjunction with caulk. Expanding foam can be used, but care must be taken because of its highly expansive nature; it could warp the frame and interfere with the ability of the stairs to open or close properly. To ensure a tight fit between the stairs' flat panel and the frame, weatherstripping or gasket material should be added either to the frame or the panel. As with all home projects, follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper installation. For safety and the extended life of the stairs, be sure to cut the stairs to the proper length. This action will prevent strain on the hinges and reduce wear on the pivotal joints of the stairs.

Knee walls

Another type of attic access is a knee-wall door. A knee wall is typically a partial-height wall that is found in the upstairs level of finished-attic homes. Knee walls are notoriously leaky and often poorly insulated.

Make sure that the knee-wall door is weather-stripped and has a latch that pulls it tightly against the frame to achieve a solid seal. Use construction adhesive and screws to attach rigid insulation to the attic side of the door. Some attic doors are full-height interior doors that should be insulated, weather-stripped, and equipped with a tight threshold.

For more information, see **Making Your Attic More Energy Efficient** from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Power Outage Information



If you lose power due to wind, rain, or other circumstances, don't worry CEL&P crews will work quickly to restore your power. Report downed power lines by calling CEL&P at 765- 362-1900 24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a week or call 911.

Outage information updates will be posted on our **Facebook**, **Instagram**, and **Twitter** pages.



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