



BBB Scam Alert: Special deal on your utility bill? It's actually a trick

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Looking to save money right now? No matter how COVID has impacted your finances, be sure to say “no” to this scam deal. This summer, [BBB Scam Tracker](#) has received reports of con artists impersonating internet, cable tv, or electricity company representatives. They claim to offer a great deal or rebate on your bill, but it’s really a way to trick unsuspecting customers into shelling out hundreds of dollars.

How the Scam Works

You receive an unsolicited call offering you reduced rates on your cable bill. Speaking to the “customer service representative” may be quite convincing. Many scammers use the same hold music as big-name cable companies and duplicate a company’s caller menu.

When speaking with the representative, they seem very professional. The caller explains that the company is offering a special promotion. If you pay several months up front, you can receive a discounted monthly rate or free perks, like premium cable channels. In another version of the con, the caller claims that you overpaid on a recent bill and are due for a rebate.

Then, things get fishy. Instead of using the payment information your cable company already has, they ask you to purchase pre-paid debit cards to make the up-front payment. Don’t do it! If you purchase the cards and send the information to the caller, your money will be lost for good.

How to Avoid a Utility Impersonation Con

- **Never make payments with prepaid debit cards or gift cards.** Scammers prefer these payment methods because there is nothing you can do to get your money back. Remember, legitimate companies almost always accept checks and credit cards as the primary means of payment.
- **If someone shows up at your doorstep, verify their identity.** If you weren’t expecting a visit, ask the person for their ID and then call your cable company to verify that they are an employee.
- **When in doubt, verify special deals with your utility company.** If you are unsure about a promotional offer you’ve been presented with, get the customer service number from the company’s official website or your latest bill. Call the company directly to make sure the offer is real.

For more information

For information about scams impersonating your cable company, see these resources from [AT&T](#), [Cox Cable](#), [Verizon](#), and [Xfinity](#). For more ways to avoid utility scams, see the [BBB Tip: Utility Imposter Scam](#) and visit [10 Steps to avoid scams](#). If you’ve been the victim of a similar scam, report it to [BBB Scam Tracker](#). Your first-hand experience can help other consumers recognize scammers’ tactics before it’s too late.

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