

For Immediate Release

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Alectra sounds the alert to its customers about increasing utility scams during Fraud Prevention Month

Mississauga, ON – Alectra Utilities, one of Ontario's largest electricity distributors, is amplifying efforts to address the surge in scams targeting utility customers during National Fraud Prevention Month in March

The most prevalent scams include fraudulent phone calls, where scammers claim to be from Alectra, alleging overdue accounts and threatening immediate electricity disconnection without prompt payment. Other tactics include scam texts, emails, and letters claiming false available refunds or outstanding amounts owed.

How to identify suspicious activity:

Customers should not be intimidated by threats of disconnection. Alectra follows a specific process for overdue account collections:

- Calls are made only Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Alectra does not have a "Disconnections Department."
- Immediate payments via pre-paid credit cards, gift cards, PayPal, or Bitcoin are never demanded.
- Alectra Utilities employs various methods to contact customers before disconnection, including written notices, hand-delivered disconnection notices, phone calls, and in-person visits.

Fraudulent calls often target small businesses during business hours and are typically made when customer service departments are closed or nearing closing time (e.g., end of the day or during holidays). These deceptive calls may originate from a 1-800 number, displaying names like "Alectra Utilities" or "Hydro." Upon calling back the displayed number, the response may include phrases like "Alectra Utilities," "Hydro," or "Disconnections Department," often citing overdue amounts ranging from \$1,000 to \$1,500.

What to do if you encounter suspicious activity:

- Always verify your account information directly with Alectra' Customer Care Representatives using the phone number provided on your bill if you suspect any suspicious activity.
- Refrain from making payments for charges not listed on your latest Alectra bill.
- Never disclose any personal information, including your Alectra bill or account number.
- Avoid clicking on any links provided in text messages.

- Do not entertain visits to your home arranged by potential fraudsters.
- Contact Alectra Utilities' Customer Care Representatives during regular business hours to discuss any outstanding account activity.

How to report suspicious activity:

You can report any suspicious incidents to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre at 1-888-495-8501, even if no money was exchanged. If you or a family member did lose money, please contact your local police.

For more information on how you can protect yourself from utility related scams, please visit: <https://alectrautilities.com/scams-fraud>.

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About Alectra Utilities

Serving more than one million homes and businesses in Ontario's Greater Golden Horseshoe area, Alectra Utilities is now the largest municipally-owned electric utility in Canada, based on the total number of customers served. We contribute to the economic growth and vibrancy of the 17 communities we serve by investing in essential energy infrastructure, delivering a safe and reliable supply of electricity, and providing innovative energy solutions. Our mission is to be an energy ally, helping our customers and the communities we serve to discover the possibilities of tomorrow's energy future.

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Media Contact

Ashley Trgachef, Media Spokesperson | Email: ashley.trgachef@alectrautilities.com | Telephone: 416.402.5469 | 24/7 Media Line: 1-833-MEDIA-LN