News Release

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NATIONAL GRID WARNS CUSTOMERS TO GUARD THEMSELVES AND SENSITIVE ACCOUNT INFORMATION

Reports of Home Invasions, Billing Scams and Employee Impersonators Increased During The Holiday Season

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During this holiday season National Grid and local police departments received an increasing number of calls from customers being targeted by billing scam artists and impersonators trying to gain access to account information and entry to National Grid customers' homes. The bill scams mirror reports received by utility companies throughout the country where the scammers are demanding immediate payment for electricity and natural gas bill balances and threatening immediate service shut-off if payments are not received within an hour or two. If the customer has made a payment, the caller will say that the payment has not been received and an immediate payment must be made. For the most part the scammers are demanding that the customer secure a pre-paid debit card and provide the account number to the scammer who then redeems the card.

National Grid does contact customers with past due balances by phone to offer payment options. Direct payment is an option but **direct payment is never demanded as a prerequisite for continued service**. If customers wish, they can arrange for a payment by check, credit card or debit card if they speak directly to a customer service representative. Payment can also be made by credit card or debit card without a representative's assistance. National Grid does not accept pre-paid debit cards for payment and would never ask a customer to acquire one of these cards to make a bill payment.

The callers have shown to be adept at extracting account information from unsuspecting customers and they use sophisticated telephone technology to convince customers they are actually calling from National Grid.

Ask Questions/Demand Proper ID

In addition to the on-going fraudulent bill collection calls, there have been recurring reports of individuals going door-to-door, identifying themselves as employees of National Grid and demanding to see the customer's electricity or natural gas bills. In other instances, people claiming to be a utility company employee have been able to gain entry to a home by telling the customer they must inspect their meter, which is usually located in the customer's basement. When the customer accompanies the impersonator into the basement, an accomplice enters the home and removes items of value without the customer knowing it.

In all instances when customers come in contact with any individual claiming to represent National Grid, they should verify their identity before divulging account information, making a bill payment or allowing access to their home. If a customer has any concerns about the nature of the contact they should call National Grid's Customer Contact Center immediately to clarify billing issues and confirm the identity of the person trying to secure account information or gain entry to the home.

In New England, customers can reach the Center at 1-800-322-3223.