



**Hawaiian
Electric**

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hawaiian Electric customers urged to be on alert for scams during busy holiday season

HONOLULU, Nov. 15, 2023 – 'Tis the season for scammers to prey on utility customers. Today is Utility Scam Awareness Day and Hawaiian Electric wants to remind customers that it doesn't accept payment via cryptocurrency, prepaid debit cards, gift cards or money transfer.

Utility scams tend to increase over the busy holidays and in the aftermath of disasters. In some recent cases, customers were told they would have their electric service shut off immediately unless they went to a Bitcoin kiosk to make a payment.

Last month, a scammer mimicked Hawaiian Electric's customer service caller ID and contacted an O'ahu business. The caller told the customer his account was 'past due,' and service would be disconnected within two hours unless he paid \$1,400 in Bitcoin.

The caller directed the customer to a nearby gas station and gave him step-by-step instructions to 'pay his bill' by depositing cash into a Bitcoin machine. The customer fed \$500 into the machine and told the caller that was all he had. When the same man called back a half hour later demanding more money, the customer contacted Hawaiian Electric.

"No one wants to be without electricity, especially over the holidays, and scammers use the threat of disconnection to strike fear in our customers," said Brendan Bailey, Hawaiian Electric vice president of customer service. "If you get a call, text, email or letter demanding immediate payment by Bitcoin, gift cards, money transfer or prepaid debit cards, it's a scam."

For fraud awareness tips, visit hawaiianelectric.com/stopscams. To report suspicious activity, go to hawaiianelectric.com/reportfraud.

As a reminder, Hawaiian Electric has extended the suspension of service disconnections for all Maui customers through at least Jan. 5, 2024, by order of the state Public Utilities Commission.

Hawaiian Electric offers the following tips:

- If a caller says your account is delinquent and threatens to shut off service immediately unless payment is made, it's a scam. Don't be fooled by the caller ID, which can be manipulated to show a legitimate phone number.
- If someone from 'Hawaiian Electric' contacts you and demands immediate payment by methods not listed at hawaiianelectric.com/paymentoptions, it's a scam.

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- If the caller asks to meet you in person to pick up a payment, it's a scam.
- If you receive an email urging you to click on an embedded link or attachment to pay a bill, think before you click. It's likely a scam.
- If someone shows up at your home or place of business claiming to be from Hawaiian Electric, ensure that person is wearing official attire with a logo, driving a properly labeled vehicle and carrying company identification. When in doubt, call customer service.

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