

OFFICE OF PEOPLE'S COUNSEL
CONSUMER ALERT
SMART METER FEE SCAM

Utility customers should be aware of a new scam aimed at confusion over smart meters, according to Baltimore City Police.

Smart meters—new meters that digitally relay energy usage by wireless network—are being installed throughout the Baltimore Gas and Electric service territory. They also have been installed in Pepco and the Delmarva Power service territories, and will be installed in the SMECO service territory soon.

The scam works like this. A caller states he or she represents your utility, and the customer must pay a deposit to receive the smart meter. The caller states that without the deposit, the utility will shut off your electric service. The caller will direct you to purchase some kind of gift card or money transfer card, and then ask you to relay that information over the phone.

This is a fraudulent activity. Utilities do not operate in this manner, and any authentic charges by the utility will be reflected on your account bill.

If you believe you have been the victim of a fraud scheme like this, you should contact your local police department.

The Public Service Commission, which regulates electric and gas utilities in Maryland, has authorized utilities to collect fees from residential and small business customers who choose not to have a smart meter installed. But customers first have to tell the utility they do not want the new meter. After that, customers will receive notice from their utility about the fee, and then have a chance to decide to avoid the fee by deciding to have the smart meter installed. **Utility representatives will not call you or come to your door to collect a smart meter fee.**

If you have a billing concern, you should first call the utility customer service department to verify your bill. To learn more about the fees that the PSC has authorized, or about smart meters, you should visit your utility's website, or see the Office of People's Counsel's guide to smart meter fees,

<http://www.opc.state.md.us/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=gkPQFYkvPO8%3d&tabid=39>.

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