

## **Scam Alert: The Utilities Scam**

This is a telephone scam from a caller pretending to be from a utilities company.

### **Here's How the Scam Works:**

You get a phone call from someone claiming to be from one of the utility companies. The scammer says that you owe money for a past utility bill that for some reason was not paid. The caller threatens to cut off the utility unless you pay the bill immediately. You are given the option of driving to the utility company's "main office", usually located at an inconvenient distance from your residence, or you can pay with a green dot card or a preloaded debit card that you can purchase at Walgreens. The caller urges you to act quickly to avoid having your utilities cut off.

### **How to Protect Yourself:**

- Stop!! Never wire money or pay with a prepaid debit card. Once sent, the money is gone.
- A real utility company will not call you and ask you to pay with green dot cards or prepaid debit cards.
- A creditor must be able to show you proof of the unpaid bill.
- Call the utility company on a number you get off an old bill, and ask if there is any money owed.