

Don't Be a Victim of a Scammer: Knowledge is Power

Scammers constantly try to prey on trusting consumers. Across the country, utility companies and the FTC have received reports of scammers posing as utility employees.

Here are a few of the more frequent scams:

Email Demanding Payment and/or Personal Information

Recently, several Athens residents received an email that appeared to be from "City of Athens Utilities," and included an Athens Utilities customer accounts email that appeared legitimate. The email sender attempted to get payment and personal information. Please be aware that we will never attempt to collect payment or personal information over email.

Phone Scams

In cases reported across the county, callers claim to be from a utility, telling the customer they're in danger of having their power or other service cut off, sometimes within the hour, unless they pay immediately. These scammers often use spoofing technology to make it look like they are calling from the utility. Often, the caller directs the customer to buy a prepaid credit card and call back on a different phone number to pay the outstanding bill.

A Knock on the Door

Imposters have knocked on customers' doors, claiming to be a representative from the utility company. Frequently, the scammer claims that payment is overdue and service will be cut off if it is not paid immediately. In other cases, the scammers have claimed that a meter is not working properly and must be immediately replaced, at the customer's expense.

How to Spot a Utility Scam

- Our employees will always wear a Hartselle Utilities uniform and carry identification.
- If you are ever asked to pay your bill using a prepaid debit card or a wire transfer, that should be a red flag – the person is not representing Hartselle Utilities.
- We will never call you and ask for payment over the phone; the only payments we accept over the phone are through our

Convenience Pay service, and these calls must be initiated by you.

- We do not collect payment or personal information over email.
- We will not cut off your service after hours or on weekends.

There may be times during weather or other emergencies that a Hartselle Utilities employee may knock on your door, and this may happen on weekends or after hours. However, our employees will never demand payment from you.

How does Hartselle Utilities contact customers whose bill is overdue? If we have not received your payment by the due date listed on your bill, we will send you a reminder postcard – even if you normally receive your bill electronically.

If your payment is not received within 10 days, we will make a third attempt to contact you with an automated call letting you know that if your payment is not received within 24 hours, your service will be cut off. This automated call is made to the number we have on file; the number is printed in red on your bill. Please note that this is an automated call, never a live person demanding payment. These calls are made during regular business hours, so if you have questions about your bill you can immediately call our office and speak to a customer service representative.

Finally, if we still have not received your payment, we will send a Hartselle Utility employee to your home to cut off your service. The employee might knock on your door as a courtesy to let you know that your service is being turned off. You have the option of paying the employee, but he or she will never demand payment.

Continued on back



Plan Ahead To Keep Your Family Safe During Stormy Weather

Your Number, Please!

If we need to communicate with you, we will use the number we have on file. Check your utility bill to make sure your telephone number is up-to-date, especially if you have moved or switched to a mobile number in the last several years.

Winter storms can bring freezing rain, ice, and snow. Spring storms can bring damaging winds and flooding rain.

Fortunately, in recent years Hartselle has not experienced widespread power outages during major winter storms. However, residents should al-

ways stay prepared. Planning and preparing now can help you lessen the impact of a major storm and keep you and your family safe.

Prepare by gathering emergency supplies for your home and your vehicle, making a family plan, and discussing emergency notifications and expectations with your workplace and/or schools.

If your power goes out, call Hartselle Utilities at (256) 773-3340 (after hours: (256) 773-2533). Don't assume that 'someone else' has called, or that we already know. Phone calls help us pinpoint exact locations of outages, which helps to restore power as quickly as possible.

HU Recognizes Employees for Years of Service

HU recently held its annual Employee Milestone Service Recognition dinner to honor employees who achieved five-year employment anniversaries during 2018. We thank you for your hard work and dedication.



5 years of service

Jonathan Kilpatric, Installer;
Glenda Turrentine, Meter Reader;
Brian Hill, Equipment Operator;
Josh Hensley, Wastewater
Treatment Operator.



10 & 15 years of service

10 years of service - Greg
Knighten, Equipment Operator;
15 years of service - Rex Higgins,
Installer; Bo Cowart, Gas
System Operator; Brian Kelsoe;
Stores Clerk; Matthew Reeves,
Serviceman.

Hartselle Utilities Welcomes New Employees

If you've visited Hartselle Utilities recently to pay your bill, you've probably seen our newest smiling face, **Jessica Ross**, in our Customer Service Department. Jessica is a diligent worker with a passion for helping people. **Kody Turner** became Hartselle Utilities newest meter reader in October 2018. His ability to learn quickly and work efficiently has made an immediate, positive impact to our Meter Reading Team. **Dylan Forman** is a hardworking, team player who joined our Field Operations Department as a Laborer in September 2018. **Andy Dove** also joined our Field Operations Department as a Laborer in October 2018. His previous experience operating heavy equipment makes him a valuable asset in our work crews.

We are excited to welcome these new employees into the Hartselle Utilities family! Each one brings with them unique skills which continue to advance our ability to better serve our customers.



From left to right - Dylan Forman, Laborer; Jessica Ross, Cashier; Kody Turner, Meter Reader; Andy Dove, Laborer.

Cold Weather Do's and Don'ts

Fire Prevention Tips from the Hartselle Fire Department

DO:

Turn space heaters off before going to bed

DO:

Keep children at least three feet away from space heaters and fireplaces

DO:

Make sure nothing blocks the exits to your home in case you need to evacuate

DON'T:

Plug a space heater into a power strip or an extension cord

DON'T:

If you have to evacuate your home due to a fire, do not go back inside for anything

DON'T:

Use a stove or oven to heat your home

Don't Be a Victim of a Scammer, continued from front page

Protect Yourself

If you ever feel pressured for immediate action by a caller or a person claiming to be an HU employee, please call our Customer Service Department at (256) 773-3340.

Never give your personal or banking information to an unsolicited caller or person.

If you suspect a scam, please call us at (256) 773-3340 or email inquiries@hartselleutilities.org. Your reports help us fight these scams.

Hartselle Recycling Calendar

Here are the next four months of Hartselle's Recycling Calendar. If you have a question about sanitation pickup, containers, or need to know your Recycling Pickup Zone, visit hartselle.org or call Public Works at (256) 773-2643.

February '19							March '19						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2						1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28			24	25	26	27	28	29	30

April '19							May '19						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
31	1	2	3	4	5	6				1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30					26	27	28	29	30	31	

ZONE 1-A
ZONE 1-B

ZONE 2-A
ZONE 2-B

ZONE 3-A
ZONE 3-B

ZONE 4-A
ZONE 4-B

For the full Recycling Pickup Calendar and Zone Map, visit hartselle.org

Have a non-emergency question or a question about your bill? Email us at inquiries@hartselleutilities.org.

We try to respond to billing and general questions within 24 hours; service issues that need investigation may take up to 48 hours.

To report a gas leak, sewer backup or power outage, call our office. Our phones are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. During business hours (M-F, 7:30 am - 4:30 pm), call (256) 773-3340. After hours, call (256) 773-2533 or (256) 773-2588.



256-773-2533 or 911



Hartselle Utilities

The Hartselle Connection is published quarterly by Hartselle Utilities.

1010 Sparkman St NW
Hartselle, AL 35640
256-773-3340
HartselleUtilities.org