Do Not Fall Victim to a Utility Scam Call

What You Need to Know and What to Do If You Think You Received a Call
Do Not Fall Victim to a Utility Scam Call

Please be vigilant and mindful of utility scams. Scams come in many forms, but the one that we are made aware of the most is the phone scam. Never offer financial or bank information over the phone, unless you prompted the call to RPU at 507.280.1500.

Imposters are calling RPU customers stating that their utilities will be shut off unless immediate payment is made over the phone by credit card or pre-paid debit card. These calls can happen at any time of the day or night. Beware; with today’s phone technology, scammers can even make the caller ID show RPU’s customer service line (507.280.1500). This is not how RPU operates, and remember that RPU would never call with this threat.

RPU will never request bank or secure information from you over the phone unless you ask to discuss your account. The RPU representative will then ask for information to identify who you are and that you are authorized to speak on behalf of the account.

What to Do If You Receive a Scam Call

• If someone calls threatening to cut off your power if you don’t pay, hang up!
• Call RPU at 507.280.1500 to report the scam.
• Never give personal or financial information to an unknown caller.

• Remember that RPU will never use threatening language or make forceful demands for payment.

This type of scam is not just seen in Rochester. Utilities throughout the nation deal with scam calls as well. Please share this information with friends and family to help ensure that they don’t fall victim to a phone scam.
Rochester Public Utilities (RPU), along with Ulteig Engineers, received a 2018 Engineering Excellence Award for work on the Douglas Trail Substation. The award was presented at a ceremony hosted by the American Council of Engineering Companies of Minnesota (ACEC).

The Douglas Trail Substation project exemplified the importance of strong working partnerships and community involvement. RPU was approached by Epic Systems Corporation for increased electric system strength and reliability at their future data center in northwest Rochester. The best answer to their needs was to build a large substation with an aggressive construction schedule. In order to meet the needs of Epic, RPU partnered with Ulteig Engineers for the project. This is the second RPU/Ulteig project to receive an Engineering Excellence Award from ACEC, with the first award received in 2016 for another substation project.

“RPU has a long and successful history with Ulteig Engineers spanning more than 35 years,” said Neil Stiller, RPU Senior Electrical Engineer. “We feel Ulteig continually meets and exceeds our expectations and this project was no different. They created plans that were sensitive to the neighboring Minnesota DNR Douglas State Trail to avoid disturbances, fitting a substation on a small triangle of land, all while managing our customer’s design objectives and following a tight timeline. We are very pleased with the outcome of this project and look forward to our continued relationship with Ulteig.”

For more information on Rochester Public Utilities, visit www.rpu.org.
Landscaping Around RPU Transformers Is a Safety Concern

Spring is a great time to plant new bushes and shrubs in your yard. However, did you know that there are issues and potential problems with planting them near and around transformers?

Improving the aesthetics of the community and neighborhoods is one of the reasons why RPU installs new electric service underground and it’s also the reason why some customers choose to plant around the pad-mounted transformers. However, there are guidelines and access requirements so RPU crews can safely work on the transformers.

Each pad-mounted transformer has a warning sticker affixed to it, outlining the dangerous voltage inside, the dangers of digging and planting around it, and a diagram for safe planting distances. This information is for the safety of both the customer and RPU lineworkers.

In most cases, RPU has a utility easement of 10 feet from the front of the property line to work in. If there are plantings or landscaping within that 10 feet, RPU may need to remove or cut the landscaping to ensure a safe working environment. The recommended clearance for all plantings near a transformer is to keep them 12 feet away from the front and 3 feet from both sides. If you have questions regarding landscaping near a pad-mounted transformer, call RPU at 507.280.1500.

In an effort to promote safe and responsible tree planting in Rochester, we have partnered with local tree and planting experts to provide a discount on trees and tree care service. Cut out the coupons on page 5 and bring them to participating Partners in Planting!
Holiday Light Recycling Update

In its seventh year, RPU’s holiday light recycling program had another successful season. RPU collected 1,820 pounds of holiday lights in 2017, which will be disassembled and recycled rather than being thrown into a landfill.

Over the past seven years, RPU has collected a total of 14,343 pounds of holiday lights. Thank you to everyone who brought their holiday lighting in to RPU for recycling! You are making a difference!
Join Us! At RPU’s 16th Annual
Arbor Day Celebration

Friday, April 27, 2018 • 11am-1pm • Three Links – Silver Lake Park
(Rain Location: RCTC’s Field House)

Free Admission!

• FREE Food, Trees & Giveaways*
• Live Music & Family Activities
• Poster Contest Winners Awarded

QUESTIONS:
Stephanie Humphrey
507.280.1639

MORE INFORMATION:
www.rpu.org

*while supplies last

SPONSORING PARTNERS:

Boys & Girls Club of Rochester • Minnesota Children’s Museum Rochester • Minnesota Department
of Natural Resources • Olmsted County Environmental Resources • Olmsted Soil & Water Conservation District •
Quarry Hill Nature Center • Rochester Art Center • Rochester Public Library • Rochester Public Works •
Saint Mary's University-Cascade Meadow • Zumbro Valley Audubon

CO-SPONSORS:

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RPU Commercial Customer Corner

‘Who Left the Lights On?’

"Who left the lights on?" You may have said this to yourself in frustration walking into your workplace after a long weekend. This could easily be replaced with, “Who left the coffeepot on?,” which leaves that unpleasant smell we know too well.

These two items may be pretty obvious because our senses pick them up with ease. A cost-effective and easy solution would be to put them on timers or occupancy sensors. What happens when we can’t see or smell the forgotten tasks? They continue on indefinitely.

One of the most overlooked energy-saving devices hangs on the wall and controls our building temperature. You might know these devices by their more common name, programmable thermostats. They look like they are installed correctly, but were they programmed appropriately, or at all? Unless you were heading into the workplace during unoccupied hours, you would never know.

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) consume the majority of energy in an office setting. By setting the thermostat to change to an unoccupied temperature setting, you can save a significant amount of energy. This can be done without any additional cost, except the time it takes to program the thermostat.

But what if you come and go and don’t have a set schedule, so you just leave it at one temperature? One solution would be to use smart thermostats that incorporate set schedules and occupancy sensors. They are able to adapt to changing environments and occupancy, making the occupants comfortable and still save money. They also have the added benefit that many smart thermostats can be controlled via a smartphone, so you can find out (and change) what the temperature is set at from anywhere.

For more information on water efficiency rebates, visit www.rpu.org or contact an RPU representative.

SOLAR CHOICE Subscription Update

Customers were asking for a way to support solar energy without having to do the installation on their home, and we answered with our SOLAR CHOICE community solar program in 2017. As the program is now closed, we wanted to provide customers with a final tally of participation.

We had 210 residential RPU customers subscribe to the energy from 861 panels. The output from the subscribed panels equates to over 288 kilowatts (kW).

Thank you for coming to our informational meetings and for supporting our SOLAR CHOICE community solar program!
Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) announces the promotion of Jeremy Sutton as the new Director of Power Resources.

Jeremy Sutton served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1995 to 2001. After his military service, he was a Senior Plant Operator for Air Products and Chemicals in Southern California, which is a steam methane reforming hydrogen production facility with cogeneration.

He started at RPU as a system operator and moved up to the role of Chief System Operator. In 2009, Sutton was tasked with starting a new department at RPU, managing MISO (Mid-continent Independent System Operators) market activities.

Sutton has a Bachelor of Arts in Business Management and is a NERC (North American Electric Reliability Corporation) Reliability Coordinator Certified Operator.

He takes over for longtime RPU employee Walter Schlink, who retired in March after over 20 years with RPU.