

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** November 17, 2020

## **PNM warns of phone scams targeting PNM customers as Thanksgiving approaches**

*Aggressive scammers threaten to shut off power unless customers pay with prepaid cards*

(ALBUQUERQUE, NM) – PNM is warning customers throughout New Mexico to be on the lookout for phone scams during Thanksgiving week. PNM is receiving reports that scammers are adding a false PNM caller ID name on their phone number to get you to answer or they leave false call-back phone numbers so that when you return the call, you hear similar pre-recorded messages as PNM, duping you in thinking it is legitimate. Once they have you on the phone, the scammer pretends to be with PNM, claims you are behind on your bill, and threatens to disconnect your electricity unless you pay with a pre-paid gift card within an hour or less.

More than 2,500 scam reports have been reported to PNM this year, with nearly 300 reports so far this month. Scammers usually demand between \$200-\$500 for residential customers and more than \$1000 for business customers. Spikes in scam reports often occur during the holidays when more people are at home and are dependent on electricity while hosting guests and cooking Thanksgiving meals. Scam reports show that customers went against their better judgement, reacted out of fear, and overlooked the red flags of the scam explaining they were afraid to be without power over the holidays.



**“YOU HAVEN’T PAID  
YOUR POWER BILL.**

**A PNM TECHNICIAN IS ON THE WAY  
RIGHT NOW TO TURN OFF YOUR POWER.**

**IT WILL REMAIN ON, THOUGH, IF YOU  
PAY THE BILL WITH A PREPAID CARD  
IN A SPECIFIED AMOUNT.”**

[A voice on the phone says]



### **What to watch for:**

- Scammer has a caller ID that reads PNM
- Scammer may know your name and address

- Scammer will claim you are past-due on your PNM bill
- Scammer will claim a technician is on their way to disconnect your power within 1-hour
- Scammer will demand you pay over the phone to prevent power from being disconnected
- Scammer will only take payment over the phone and will only accept a pre-paid card
- If the caller is calling at odd hours, the weekend, or on a holiday, it's a scam.

**What you should do if you receive a call from a suspected scammer:**

- **Initiate the call yourself.** Firmly tell them you will contact PNM directly using the number on your bill, which is 888-DIAL-PNM (888-342-5766).
- **Don't take the claims as truth.** Check your own PNM bill to verify your balance.
- **Check the clock and calendar.** Scammers often call outside of business hours or on the holidays, making it harder for you to verify and causing you to bypass red flags by reacting out of fear. PNM does not shut off power over the weekend or on holidays and never disconnects power without providing written notice in advance.
- **Never give banking information over the phone unless you initiate the call** to a number you know is legitimate, even if the caller insists you have a past-due bill, or your electricity will be shut off. PNM does not demand banking information by email or phone and will not force you to pay by phone as your *only* option.
- **If the caller demands payment by a pre-paid card, gift card, or wiring money, it is a scam.** Legitimate companies don't demand payment by cash reload cards (like MoneyPak, Vanilla, or Reloadit), gift cards (like iTunes or Amazon), or cryptocurrency (like Bitcoin).
- **Listen to your instincts.** If the caller is convincing but threatening, then simply hang up and initiate contact with PNM yourself.

PNM is working the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) because these fraudsters are using VoIP telecommunication phone lines to scam customers out of money, which is a federal crime. PNM and the FBI are asking New Mexico customers for help by reporting the details of any scammers that may have contacted them to the FBI so the agency can track and analyze them against similar scams and suspects. Reports can be made at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov). PNM is also asking customers to report the same information by calling 888-DIAL-PNM. Find out more about how you can protect yourself and your business from scams about this scam at [PNM.com/scam-calls](http://PNM.com/scam-calls).

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*With headquarters in Albuquerque, PNM is the largest electricity provider in New Mexico, serving 525,000 customers in dozens of communities across the state. PNM is a subsidiary of PNM Resources, an energy holding company also headquartered in Albuquerque. For more information, visit PNM.com.*

# SPOOFING EXAMPLE

00:09 Verizon 95% 11:17 AM

00:09

Verizon

## PNM

Mobile (888) 342-5766



Add call



Video call



Bluetooth



Speaker



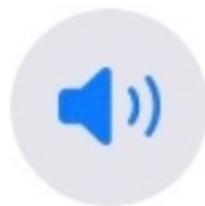
Mute



Keypad



# Voicemail



## Transcription Beta

"Good good day welcome to PNM this is an automated call to inform you that your account reflects the disconnection order taking place today due to nonpayment history press two to be transferred to our billing department or please contact us at [505-796-6785](tel:505-796-6785) to avoid the disconnection sorry for any inconvenience that this may cause you thank you for choosing PNM..."

Was this transcription [useful](#) or [not useful](#)?



**WARNING FOR PNM CUSTOMERS:**

**YOU MAY BE  
CALLED BY A  
SCAMMER  
AROUND  
THANKSGIVING!**

**RAISE AWARENESS BY SHARING**

**Learn the signs. Help put scammers out of business.**