



PG&E Warns of an Emerging Scam Campaign

In recent weeks, PG&E has received dozens of reports on an emerging scam. It involves people claiming to be from PG&E who contact a listing agent about a property in escrow. They tell the agent the property's utility meter needs to be replaced and that a deposit payment is needed immediately, sometimes within the hour, to avoid disconnection. Similar scam attempts are also being reported to other California utilities.

PG&E urges real estate agents to remember that if you receive a call from someone claiming to represent PG&E who is threatening disconnection if you do not make immediate payment, you should immediately hang up and call them at 1-833-500-SCAM (7226) to confirm account details and outstanding balance. "PG&E will never ask for you for your financial information over the phone or via email, nor will we request payment via pre-paid debit cards or other payment services like Zelle," said Aaron Johnson, PG&E Bay Area regional vice president.

Signs of a potential scam

- **Threat to disconnect:** Scammers may aggressively demand immediate payment for an alleged past due bill.
- **Request for immediate payment:** Scammers may instruct the customer to purchase a prepaid card and then call them back supposedly to make a bill payment.
- **Request for prepaid card:** When the customer calls back, the caller asks the customer for the prepaid card's number, which grants the scammer instant access to the card's funds.
- **Refund or rebate offers:** Scammers may say that your utility company overbilled you and owes you a refund, or that you are entitled to a rebate.

Scammers can be convincing, however with the right information, you can learn to detect and report these predatory scams. ■

The Important Role of Enforcement in Regulating California's Real Estate Industry

As a licensing and regulatory agency with consumer protection as its primary mission, the Department of Real Estate (DRE) is responsible for enforcing California's Real Estate Law and Subdivided Lands Law.

With this authority, DRE can deny a license to an applicant if they do not meet the requirements for licensure and discipline a license for proven violations of California law.

DRE's discipline may range from license revocation for more serious violations to public reproof, issuing a corrective action letter, or issuing citations and fines for less significant violations. DRE also may issue Desist and Refrain Orders to stop activities that violate Real Estate Law or Subdivided Lands Law and issue Bar Orders for the most egregious offenses to prohibit a person or entity from engaging in real estate activities for up to three years.

DRE enforces these laws to achieve maximum protection for real estate consumers, while exercising impartiality and fairness toward both the consumer and the industry. Many of DRE's enforcement actions originate as consumer complaints.

DRE posts [summaries of the most serious enforcement actions](#) taken against licensees, as well as [other disciplinary actions](#) on its website. ■