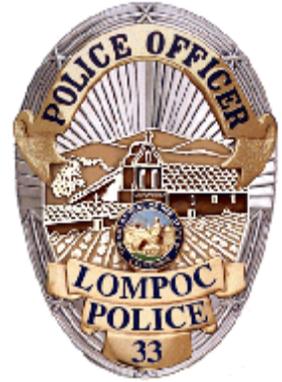


Also available in Spanish.

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Patrick Walsh
Chief of Police

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, September 12, 2014

Payment SCAM – Lompoc Municipal Utilities – Phone Solicitation

The City of Lompoc's Municipal Utilities has been made aware of fraudulent demands for payment to avoid the disruption of utility services. A common ruse is that a meter is scheduled for removal and a payment has to be made immediately to avoid the disruption of service. The City does not require a customer to pay for meter maintenance other than through their usual and customary utility charge.

The City will never notify you only by phone for any meter maintenance or account servicing. Beware of anyone demanding you to pay by a specific payment method. The City only mails notices for delinquent payments and always notifies customers of pending equipment changes by hand delivered methods (in person or with door hangers). The City has several methods of payment that we accept and we do not require the use of prepaid cards to satisfy obligations.

The current scam includes at least one person, representing themselves as Vanessa Ocampo of the City, notifies a customer their meter is being taken out and that to insure its quick replacement requires a prepaid payment to avoid shutoff.

The scam has been able to "spoof" the City's main phone number with caller ID systems to make the scam appear more legitimate. To further enforce the legitimate nature of the SCAM, at least one of the callers provides their name, a Vanessa Ocampo. Please be aware the City does not have caller ID for the main phone number or any other phone number and there is no Vanessa Ocampo employed by the City. Also be aware that any meter maintenance is arranged well in advance and is done with excellent customer service to insure the absolute minimum in service outage and never for multiple days.

To ensure you have a legitimate request, feel free to call City Hall's main number at (805) 736-1261 where you will be greeted by our receptionist. While the "spoofed" scam call gives a caller ID for the City's main number a return call to the main number will not go to the scammer.

Never provide private information to anyone unless you have initiated the request. Always call to get your account information if you don't already have it available from your utility bill.

This is a common scam and if you are called, please ask for as much information as possible from the caller including their company name, the individual's name, their direct callback number. Do not agree to pay any amount and never give any account information over the phone (card or utility information) and report to the Lompoc Police Department.

For More Information Contact Sgt. Chuck Strange, PIO at (805) 875-8155