



## VINELAND MUNICIPAL UTILITIES WARNS CUSTOMERS ABOUT UTILITY PHONE SCAM



Vineland Municipal Utilities (VMU) officials are warning businesses and residents about phone scam operations involving fraudulent claims of past due utility payments.

Customers are receiving calls from people who refer to themselves as VMU Customer Service Representatives. The callers are advising customers they are behind on their utility bill and a payment must be made immediately to avoid disconnection of service.

The scammers are using a cloned telephone number making the call seem like it originated from Vineland Municipal Utilities. The call back number provided by the scammers includes a recording exactly the same as the VMU phone system recording. Customers are then asked to provide personal information such as a social security number and banking information.

VMU officials urge customers not to provide any banking information over the phone. VMU representatives do not call customers regarding past due bills. The utility sends notices out to those customers who are behind on their bill.

“These callers can sound very convincing and are often quite persistent and even threatening,” said Municipal Utilities Director John Lillie. “We don’t want any of our residents being scared into releasing personal or banking information over the phone. Be aware, payments are only accepted by mail, in person at Vineland City Hall, or via our web portal with a credit or debit card.”

In order to identify a fraudulent call, VMU recommends the following tips to customers:

- Ask for the caller’s name, department, and business phone number. If caller refuses to provide information requested, terminate call.
- Ask caller to verify your utility account information.
- If customer suspects a fraudulent call, jot down phone number and report it to the local authorities.
- If you are victim of such a scam, please call the local authorities to report it.