



## Consumer Alert

### OPC Warns of Active Third Party Supplier Scam

**Utility Scammers May Be in Your Neighborhood**  
*OPC Offers Tips on Dealing with Energy Suppliers*

**May 18, 2022**

The Office of the People's Counsel (OPC) is investigating reports that a Third Party (energy) Supplier (TPS) is deceptively switching consumers' utility accounts to its company rolls without their consent. One resident tells OPC they were visited by a person who said they were from STAY DC, offering payment assistance for utility bills. Reportedly, the visitor had a badge with his picture and STAY DC on it.

STAY DC was the pandemic relief program that provided rental and utility bill assistance. But the District stopped taking applications in October 2021. Unfortunately, the consumer allowed the seller to see their utility bill only to learn later that their gas and electric accounts were switched to the TPS without their knowledge.

TPS companies may legally sell electric and natural gas services in the District. Often these companies hire independent contractors to go door to door to sign up new customers, however, they must follow certain rules. The rules can be found in OPC's Consumer's Guide to Third Party Suppliers on [opc-dc.gov](https://opc-dc.gov)

**Here are some tips for dealing with any energy supplier that shows up or calls.**

**Ask** the representative to provide a photo ID. The **ID MUST** display a company logo.

Unless there is a public safety emergency, utility companies rarely visit your home or stop you on the street.

**NEVER** give out personal or account information such as your social security number, utility account number or credit card number.

If threatened with disconnection if you do not make a payment, check the balance on your latest bill and call the customer service number listed to verify your service status. Utilities will notify you multiple times in advance if you are about to be disconnected.

**NEVER** agree to make a payment using a pre-paid debit at a convenience store.

**DO NOT** be pressured to sign up for a limited time or promotional offer.

**Ask** for any offer in writing.

**BEFORE** switching to a TPS, take the time to carefully review the details of a contract before signing. Consider whether your household will save energy and money on utility bills with a TPS.

### **About Third Party Suppliers**

Third Party Suppliers are authorized by the DC Public Service Commission (PSC) to sell alternative energy resources such as energy generated by solar, wind, or water. Their prices are not regulated by the PSC and may be higher than Pepco or Washington Gas rates. The energy is still delivered through the local utilities, and you would contact them for service issues.

### **How do you know if you are enrolled with a TPS?**

Listed on your Pepco bill are Electricity Supplier Charges and on your Washington Gas bill are Gas Supplier Charges. If you see a company's name other than Pepco or Washington Gas listed as the supplier, then you may be enrolled with a TPS company.

Marketing materials must clearly show a PSC license number. If no number is shown, the company might not be authorized to operate in the District.

If you are concerned about questionable tactics by an energy supplier or suspect you have been scammed, call OPC at (202)

727-3071 and we will investigate. You also can file a complaint on this [link](#).

Additional resources and help may be found at [opc-dc.gov](http://opc-dc.gov).

**Contact OPC @ (202) 727-3071**

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