

Email Scam Targets Personal Information of PSE&G Customers

Tom Johnson | January 16, 2014

Clicking link in bogus email bill can open customer computers to information theft



Utility customers across the state are being warned about an email scam involving bogus electric bills that could leave customers' computers vulnerable to theft of personal information.

The alert was issued by Public Service Electric & Gas, the state's largest utility, as well as the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities. The scam has been reported across the country, including PSEG Long Island, a utility recently being managed by the Newark company.

Approximately 53 PSE&G customers in New Jersey have reported receiving emails that look like a pending utility bill with a link to view account information, according to Kristine Lloyd, a spokeswoman for the utility, which serves 2.2 million electric customers.

The utility cautions customers not to click any links in a suspicious email or open any attachments. Doing so downloads malicious software (malware) that can retrieve personal and other information from a customer's computer, said Lloyd.

"Reports of cybercrime are on the rise, and we want to ensure that no PSE&G customer becomes a victim," said Joseph Forline, vice president of customer solutions for the utility. "We urge our customers to be cautious when opening e-mail. It's always a safe practice to go directly to our website to log into your account, rather than clicking on a link in an e-mail."

According to the BPU, false invoices supposedly from third-party suppliers also have been e-mailed to customers in New Jersey. (Third-party suppliers are those who provide electricity to consumers instead of their incumbent utility). Clicking on the link could infect a customer's computer with a virus, according to the state agency.