



powering lives

For Immediate Release:

BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU® NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Thomas Johnson Better Business Bureau: 312-245-2643

CONTACT: Linsey Wisniewski, ComEd: (312) 394-3500

BBB and ComEd Team Up to Warn Customers – Alarming Trends in Door to Door and Utility Scams in Chicago Neighborhoods

CHICAGO (May 16, 2017) - With the return of warm weather, deceptive door-knockings and utility scams are kicking into peak season.

The Better Business Bureau and ComEd, which have a long standing business alliance of more than 90 years, are teaming up to warn consumers around the Chicago and Northern Illinois areas to watch out for fraud.

According to the [Better Business Bureau Scam Tracker Risk Report](#) “Home Improvement Scams” were the #1 riskiest scams in the USA.

Steve Bernas, president and CEO of BBB Chicago and Northern Illinois says, “Consumer safety is at the core of our mission and deceptive door-knockers often con consumers into agreements for shoddy home services or make attempts to steal money and I.D. information with false claims regarding their alarm, cable, or electric services.”

Fidel Marquez, senior vice president of Governmental and External Affairs, ComEd, says they continue to see trends in a variety of energy-oriented scams. Those problems range from utility impersonators conning customers at their doorsteps to scammers calling to threaten service disconnect unless an immediate payment with a prepaid credit card is made.

“We are continuing to see an unsettling number of scams, including phone impersonations where scam artists call customers claiming they are a utility representative and proceed to swindle unsuspecting victims out of money or financial information,” said Fidel Marquez, senior vice president of Governmental and External Affairs, ComEd. “We are committed to keeping our customers informed of activity that could impact their service or accounts, and we are pleased to join efforts with the Better Business Bureau to get the word out and raise greater awareness among our customers.”

Increasingly, ComEd is seeing Hispanic-owned businesses and residents being targeted. Norma Chilaca, the owner of Nicky's Hotdogs in Garfield Ridge, was the recent victim of a utility scam in which the imposter called and threatened to disconnect the restaurant's service unless immediate payment was made via a prepaid credit card. "Keeping our restaurant up and running is a priority, so when the caller threatened to cut off our power, we rushed to pay without question," said Chilaca. "By the time I realized it was a scam, the money was long gone."

BBB and ComEd urge anyone encountering any type of scam to report it to the [BBB Scam Tracker](#), and to call police if anyone attempts to scam you at your door. Anyone who believes he or she has been a target of a phone scam is urged to contact the Illinois Attorney General's office toll free at 1-800-386-5438 (TTY 1-800-964-3013) or visit the Illinois Attorney General's web site at www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov and click on the link "Protecting Consumers."

Customers can avoid being scammed by taking a few precautions:

- **Do not feel compelled to open the door** to anyone you don't know and **always ask to see a company photo ID** before allowing any worker into your home or business.
- **Never provide social security or personal information** to anyone initiating contact with you claiming to be a utility representative or requesting you to send money to another person or entity other than your local utility providers.
- **When in doubt, check it out.** Be skeptical of individuals wearing clothing with old or defaced company logos. If you have any doubts, ask to see a company photo ID.
- **Never make payment for services to anyone coming to the door.**
- For home repairs always take the time to **check the references and ratings** of the company before doing business with them.
- If customers have concerns about the status of their ComEd account, they can also contact the company at 1-800-EDISON1.

***ABOUT BBB:** For more than 100 years, Better Business Bureau has been helping people find businesses, brands and charities they can trust. In 2016, people turned to BBB more than 167 million times for BBB Business Profiles on more than 5.2 million businesses and Charity Reports on 11,000 charities, all available for free at bbb.org. The Council of Better Business Bureaus is the umbrella organization for the local, independent BBBs in the United States, Canada and Mexico, as well as home to its national and international programs on dispute resolution, advertising review, and industry self-regulation. BBB Serving Chicago and Northern Illinois serves 19 counties in Illinois.*

***ABOUT ComEd:** Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd) is a unit of Chicago-based Exelon Corporation (NYSE: EXC), the nation's leading competitive energy provider, with approximately 7.8 million customers. ComEd provides service to approximately 10 million customers across northern Illinois, or 70 percent of the state's population. For more information visit ComEd.com, and connect with the company on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).*