



January 2025

## Avoid utility bill scams — hang up on suspicious calls

The phone rings. The call seems to be from a local number — it may even say it's from Austin Energy — so you answer. The caller tells you your utility bill is overdue. They threaten you, claiming that you must pay immediately or be disconnected. They ask for payment by an unusual method, perhaps a prepaid Visa® gift card, Zelle® or even cryptocurrency. It's no coincidence that paying by these methods makes it nearly impossible to trace the scammer or get your money back.

Or maybe the caller tries a different con: They tell you that you've overpaid and that they need your bank account number or credit card number to process a "refund."

Scams are constantly evolving, but the way to avoid being scammed remains

the same. Hang up, then call the number shown on your utility bill — **512-494-9400** — to check your account status and report the scam. Do not use any call-back number given to you by the scammer.

Remember that City of Austin Utilities will never call residential customers with immediate cut-off deadlines, ask for a credit card or wire transfer over the phone or demand payment through a non-traceable method.

If you receive a call from a scammer, make a note of the call details, especially the phone number the call appears to be from and any call-back number the scammer gave you. Report the call to City of Austin Utilities, who will work with the law enforcement agencies that investigate scammers and shut them down.



## Does someone in your home rely on life-support equipment?

If you are a City of Austin Utilities customer and your medical needs require electricity, you may qualify for the Medically Vulnerable Registry. The Medically Vulnerable Registry is designed to support medically vulnerable customers by focusing on two key objectives:

- » **Offering additional support** in bill management and flexible payment plans to avoid service interruptions due to non-payment.
- » **Personalized emergency** backup plans ahead of a power outage.

Eligible customers with critical medical conditions that rely on life support systems, critical illnesses that require electricity or water and other serious illnesses will receive personal case management directly from the City of Austin and partnering agencies.

To qualify for the registry, a licensed medical provider must verify that you or



someone in your household meets the registry criteria.

Register now by calling **512-494-9400** or by visiting **coautilities.com/go/mvr**.



## Please don't clog the creeks!

Disposing of tree limbs and branches in or near creeks can block culverts and increase the risk of flooding when it rains. Learn how to properly dispose of brush at **[austintexas.gov/composting](https://austintexas.gov/composting)**. Report any clogged culvert concerns through the Austin 3-1-1 mobile app or call **3-1-1** or **512-974-2000**.

# Stay warm and save this winter

Explore these tools and tips from Austin Energy and Austin Water to help you save on winter utility bills.

## For your electric bill:

- » **Set your thermostat a few degrees lower** to save on energy costs.
- » **On cold days, keep window shades open** so the sun can help heat your home.
- » **Seal up your home to prevent air drafts.** Caulk, weatherstrip and add foam gap filler around windows, doors and plumbing fixtures.
- » **When not in use, close your fireplace damper** to prevent heat from escaping up the chimney.
- » **Keep the heat in the oven by using the oven light to check your food** instead of opening the door. Stay safe and never use your oven to heat your home.
- » **Check your energy use regularly to avoid surprises.** Log in at [coautilities.com](https://coautilities.com) and view the Energy Management tool.  
Find more winter savings tips at [austinenenergy.com/winter](https://austinenenergy.com/winter).



## For your water bill:

- » **Don't water outside in the winter months.** Turn off automatic irrigation.
- » **Winterize outdoor spigots** when temperatures are expected to dip below freezing to prevent broken pipes.
- » **Wash only full loads** in your dishwasher and washing machine.
- » **Take shorter showers.** Try for less than 5 minutes.
- » **Look for the WaterSense® label** when buying new water-using appliances and fixtures.
- » **Fix leaky faucets.** Even a slow drip can waste several gallons a day.  
Find more water-saving tips at [austintexas.gov/departments/water-saving-tips](https://austintexas.gov/departments/water-saving-tips).



## Could you use an extra \$90 per month?

If you are struggling with your utility bill, City of Austin Utilities is here to help. The Customer Assistance Program (CAP) is designed to help residential customers with low or fixed incomes.

If you participate in state, federal or local assistance programs, you may qualify for utility bill discounts. Even if you do not currently participate in these programs, you may still qualify based on your household income level.

CAP utility bill discounts can help reduce your utility bills up to \$90 per month. These discounts add up to an average of \$1,092 per year!

To check your eligibility, call the CAP team at **512-494-9400** or visit [coautilities.com/go/discounts](https://coautilities.com/go/discounts) to apply online.



## Prepare for winter: protect the 4 Ps

The City of Austin encourages you to prepare for winter weather. Don't wait for extreme cold or winter storms. Now is the time to get ready.

To stay safe during cold weather, protect the 4 Ps: People, pets, pipes and plants.

- » **People:** Before going outside, dress in layers to protect yourself from the cold. While heating your home, do not use a generator, grill, camp stove or any gasoline-, propane- or charcoal-burning device. These devices generate deadly carbon monoxide gas, which can be odorless and colorless.
- » **Pets:** Bring your pets inside to keep them warm and safe.
- » **Pipes:** Insulate or cover exposed pipes to protect them from freezing; turn off outside faucets; drip ONE faucet only, if needed.
- » **Plants:** Cover your plants or bring them in.

For more information on how to prepare for winter weather, visit [readycentraltexas.org](https://readycentraltexas.org).

## Building Austin

City of Austin Capital Delivery Services (CDS) invites residents and community partners to attend the Building Austin event series in 2025. These quarterly sessions are designed to keep the community informed about major infrastructure projects that will impact Austin's growth and development. Each event will spotlight upcoming projects in a specific area of the city. Residents can participate in-person or virtually. Find dates, locations and registration at [publicinput.com/buildingaustin](https://publicinput.com/buildingaustin).

Para obtener una copia en español de esta publicación, visite [coautilities.com/go/utilitynews](https://coautilities.com/go/utilitynews).

Customer Service Phone: 512-494-9400

24-Hour Power Outage Reporting: 512-322-9100 | 24-Hour Emergency Water Service: 512-972-1000

North Austin Utility Customer Service Center (Walk-in Center): 8716 Research Blvd., Ste. 115

South Austin Utility Customer Service Center (Walk-in Center): 1901 W. William Cannon Drive, Ste. 100

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