

DON'T GET "ESCOS SLAMMED"

(HOW NOT TO BE SCAMMED BY DECEPTIVE SALES TECHNIQUES)

As a result of the deregulation of our local power companies, **YOU CAN CHOOSE** your third-party energy supplier through Con Edison or National Grid. Don't allow a stranger to **FORCE YOU TO CHOOSE** through deceptive, coercive or even illegal sales techniques. **There has been an epidemic of local residents being intimidated into changing their provider due to misrepresentations by third-party sales staff of regional Energy Service Companies (ESCOS)** going door-to-door claiming to "save you money on your electric or gas bill." If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

HERE'S HOW NOT TO GET SCAMMED AND "ESCOS SLAMMED" IF YOU ARE VISITED OR CALLED BY A SALES REPRESENTATIVE CLAIMING TO WORK FOR A UTILITY COMPANY.

1. KNOW THE SCAM: "ESCOS slamming" begins when a representative of an ESCOS such as IDT Energy either misrepresents him/herself ("*Hi, I work for Con Ed/National Grid*") OR misrepresents his/her intent ("*Show me your Con Ed/National Grid bill—I want to save you money.*")

2. KNOW THE "SLAM": "ESCOS slamming" happens **when a third party provider's sales reps (usually door-to-door salespeople) entice you into signing up for their "service"** (e.g., IDT Energy misrepresents itself as being a direct provider to energy companies and thus if you "buy direct" from them, you will see a 7% reduction on your energy bill) OR **sign you up for their service without your permission**, by obtaining your personal information (name, address, Con Ed account number) or even by forging your signature. In many cases, instead of a reduction, you will see an increase in your monthly bill by \$100 or more.

3. KNOW YOUR RIGHTS: It is your choice to use a third-party energy supplier and only your choice (for more info, visit www.poweryourway.com for a list of ESCOS and options). If you get pressured into switching to a third-party provider, **JUST SAY NO. If you were pressured to sign up with a different provider, feel you were misled and signed up or were switched to a different energy company without your permission ("slammed") call the number on your Con Edison or National Grid bill immediately.** You can refuse the service over the phone. You may still need to call the ESCOS to confirm the change has been made. Do it immediately!

4. TAKE ACTION: Even if you have not been scammed or "slammed," you can take immediate control of your energy accounts by asking for an "**ESCOS freeze**" on your accounts, requiring any changes to your account to come from you, not from a third-party ESCOS. If you have been scammed or "slammed," request the "ESCOS freeze" immediately once you have restored Con Ed or National Grid as your energy provider.

5. FILE A COMPLAINT: If you have been scammed or "slammed," you can **file a complaint** and make a difference. Complaints can be filed with:

Better Business Bureau

<http://welcome.bbb.org/>

NYS Public Service Commission

<http://www.dps.state.ny.us> or 1-800-342-3377

Federal Trade Commission,
Bureau of Consumer Protection

<https://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov/>

You can always contact your local elected officials and Community Board for assistance.

THE BEST CONSUMER IS AN EDUCATED CONSUMER. DON'T GET SCAMMED OR "ESCOS SLAMMED." IF YOU DO, OR KNOW SOMEONE WHO HAS, TAKE ACTION TODAY!