

# BUSINESSSAFE

*BusinessSafe is designed to aid businesses in protecting the safety and well-being of Florida's residents and visitors from threats. BusinessSafe provides private sector partners with open source information, analysis and resources to help protect their businesses and communities.*

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## BusinessSafe Sector Highlight: Energy Sector

The U.S. Energy Sector is vital to individuals and critical infrastructure across the United States. The Sector includes more than 10,000 power plants across the U.S., ranging from coal to nuclear and renewable energy, as well as the exploration, production, storage, transport, and refinement of oil and natural gas. Florida is the second largest producer of electricity and the fourth largest consumer of electricity in the country. Disruptions to the Energy Sector can have widespread impacts across multiple sectors.

### Criminal Activity

**Theft** - Criminal actors may tamper with or alter energy meters to steal electricity or attempt to steal wiring and components from electrical facilities and distribution systems. Electric companies use multiple mitigation tools to maintain the security of electric meters and distribution systems. However, tampering with electric meters, facilities, or distribution systems is dangerous and can result in serious injury or death from electrocution, explosion or fire.

[Police: Thief cuts copper wire from FPL plants](#)

[Florida Man Accused of Stealing \\$12,000 in Electricity to Power His Marijuana Grow House](#)

**Scams** – Criminal actors may contact individuals or businesses claiming to be representatives of a local utility company demanding payment or personal information. Often these imposter scams include aggressive threats to shut off services and may require the bill to be paid immediately. Criminal actors may demand that payments be made using prepaid debit or gift cards or mobile apps. Criminal actors may also show up at a business or residence claiming to be from the electric company and request personal information, payments, or access to the building or home.

[Tampa Bay area utilities sounding the alarm after a spike in imposter calls](#)

[SCAM ALERT: New Duke Energy scam says residents must pay for 'smart meter'](#)

[Door-to-Door energy-related scammers target homes, businesses](#)



Florida Fusion Center  
(800) 342-0820

[FLBusinessSafe@FDLE.state.fl.us](mailto:FLBusinessSafe@FDLE.state.fl.us)

Author: FL8642, Approval: FL8600, HSEC: 1, 2, FSIN: 1.1.1, 1.1.4, 1.2.1, 1.10, 2.6.1, 3.1.6 FFC: 1.1, 2.1, 4.3, 6.9

**Cyberattacks** - Industrial control systems within the Energy Sector are increasingly targeted by cyberattacks. Cyber criminals may use phishing emails to attempt to gain access to facilities' networks through malicious email links. This access allows the criminals to deploy ransomware to encrypt the company's files rendering the data unusable by systems that may depend on them. The federal government has tasked the Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response with ensuring cyber resilience of the nation's electric power grid and oil and gas infrastructure.

[Cyberattack targets oil infrastructure, shuttering facility for two days](#)  
[Rural Alabama electric cooperative hit by ransomware attack](#)

### Other Threats

**Natural Disasters** - Natural disasters can impact the Energy Sector by damaging facilities or assets or interrupting operations for extended periods of time. Individuals and businesses are encouraged to have a natural disaster plan that includes preparing for potential power outages.

[Hurricane Ida took down more power poles in 2 states than Katrina, Ike, Delta and Zeta combined, power company says](#)  
[Winter Storm Leaves Many In Texas Without Power And Water](#)

### Resources

- Businesses and individuals should report suspected electric theft or tampering to their local electric company.
- Utilities United Against Scams offers utility customers information on suspicious behaviors and tactics utilized by scammers on their [website](#).
- For more information or to report a utility scam in Florida, individuals and businesses can file a complaint through the Office of the Florida Attorney General [online](#) or by calling 1-866-966-7226.
- The Federal Trade Commission provides information on their [website](#) on how to spot, report, and mitigate a utility scam as well as what to do if you paid a scammer.
- The U.S. Department of Energy is the agency responsible for the Energy Sector. Their [website](#) offers information and resources regarding emergency response and preparedness for businesses and individuals.
- **“If You See Something, Say Something®”** – Report suspicious activity to your local law enforcement agency, on the FDLE website using [Florida's See Something, Say Something Tool Kit](#), via the Florida See Say app, or by calling 855-FLA-Safe. In an emergency, call 911.



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