

Consumer Alert

Communities Affected: Ontario | Date: February 3, 2021

Consumer Alert: No home inspection required for COVID-19 Energy Assistance Programs

The Government of Ontario recently announced changes to the COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) and the COVID-19 Energy Assistance Program for Small Business (CEAP-SB) to help more customers during this difficult time.

Some energy customers have reported receiving calls from scammers referencing the OEB's [CEAP program webpages](#) and then falsely telling customers that a home inspection is required in order to qualify. Home inspections are **not** required to qualify for CEAP or CEAP-SB, nor does the OEB conduct home inspections or call customers to promote the program.

Consumers need only apply to their local natural gas and electricity distributor or unit sub-meter provider to be considered for CEAP or CEAP-SB. Call or visit your energy company's website for more information about how to apply.

Consumer Tips:

- Beware of messages with COVID-19 in the subject line and claiming to be from your utility. There have been several reports of emails, texts and websites sharing false information about bill relief programs, refunds and alternative payment methods during the COVID-19 emergency.
- Protect your personal information – do not feel compelled to share your personal information. Your utility bill is private. It contains personal information like your account number and energy usage.
- Remain vigilant and continue to use safe web browsing and email practices. Make sure you are accessing a safe and trusted source such as the utility's website or call centre telephone number **exactly** as displayed on your bill.
- Consumers concerned about any suspicious communications can contact the [Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre](#) or call 1-888-495-8501.

Resources:

- Consumers with questions about their energy providers are encouraged to contact the OEB.

- Call (Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.): 1-877-632-2727 (toll-free within Ontario) or 416-314-2455 (within Greater Toronto Area)
 - Text: 1-844-621-9977 (toll-free within Ontario) or 416-544-5190 (within Greater Toronto Area)
 - Email: publicinformation@oeb.ca
- Learn more about how the [OEB protects consumers](#).
 - Find out if you qualify for special [financial assistance programs](#) for low-income customers.
 - See what measures the OEB is taking in response to the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).