

Scams and Hoaxes

The Power Saver



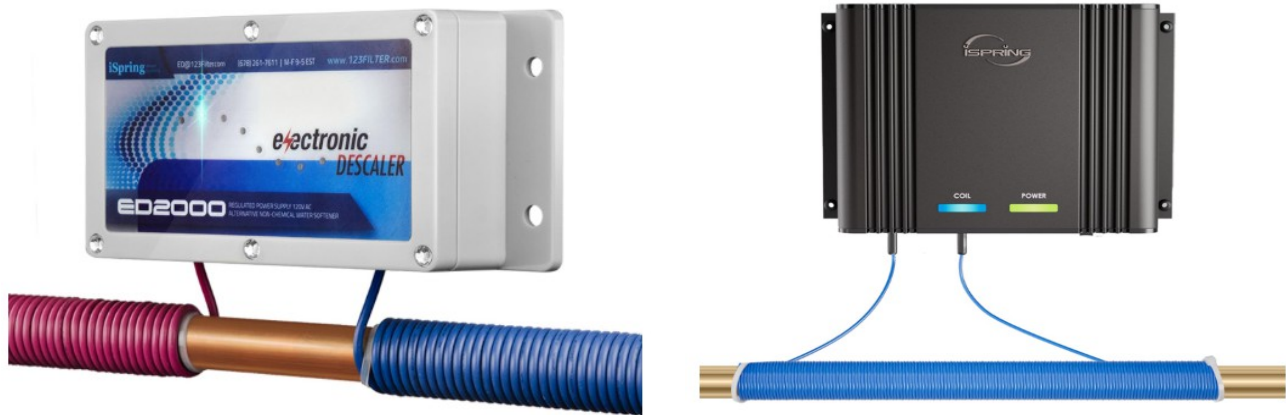
Scam Power Savers

This is a scam that has been around for years. Scammers sell these small devices that plug into an electrical outlet and claim to save you a lot of money on your power bill. Most claim to have been invented by German scientists and have names like “Power Saver,” “StopWatt,” “EsaverWatt,” or “ProPowerSave.” Scammers even use a well-known personality's name and image as the inventor, plus numerous false testimonials, to hawk these products. These expensive devices are just small capacitors in a box that do absolutely nothing for a residential user. As with any hoax product, they suggest buying multiples of them.

If you want to test the concept on the cheap, get an air conditioner capacitor, put a power cord on it (safely insulated, of course), and see what it does or doesn't do.

BTW, along the same line, there are numerous ads for small air coolers and heaters that use little or no energy. These are also scams. Remember that “There is no such thing as a free lunch” and “If it is too good to be true, then it isn't true.”

Electronic Water Softeners / Descalers



Typical Electronic Water Softeners / Descalers

These claim to remove Calcium from the water and prevent the build up of scale. In reading the description of how one works, it claims to convert Calcium ions into harmless Calcium Carbonate, which is chalk. Where does the Carbon come from? There is no source of Carbon and the description is therefore bogus. Most such devices do not even provide a description of how they work.

These devices claim to work on both Copper and Plastic pipes. When used on a Copper pipe, as shown above, the pipe is essentially a “short circuited coil” and no electric field will penetrate the pipe to the water flowing through the pipe.

As with any scam device, the instructions say that if one doesn't work well enough, buy a second one. In fact, one set of instructions say to put one on the cold water supply into the hot water heater and one on the hot water pipe from the heater. Fool me once, sham on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.

I confess that I bought one of these, not because I thought it would do anything, but because my wife believed the check-out guy at a store rather than her engineer husband. It took months before she admitted that the flashing light thing did absolutely nothing.

Surge Protectors on Air Conditioners



Typical Surge Protectors

Many air conditioning contractors pressure customers into putting surge protectors on their air conditioners. If you have a split unit, they put them on the outdoor unit, containing the compressor, rather than the indoor air handler that contains the sensitive electronic controls.

Putting a surge protector on the equipment to be protected will do little or nothing to protect that equipment! The reason is that there must be several feet of wire between the surge protector and the equipment being protected for it to be protected. The wire serves as a low-pass filter to smooth out any surge that gets past the surge protector.

The 2023 National Electrical Code now requires whole-house surge protectors on the circuit breaker panel. This will protect the air conditioner and all other items in the home. I have long advocated this approach, have installed several of them on homes and RVs. They have effectively protected homes from near-by lightening strikes.

Free Energy Generators Using Magnets

A wacky idea by an aging Nicola Tesla has resulted in a century of scammers, hoaxes, and frauds. The Internet abounds with demonstrations of all kinds of devices that claim to generate free electricity, using only magnets. These are all hoaxes and many sell the secret plans to build your own free energy device.

One European hoaxster demonstrated a generator with no external connections and not control mechanism. Oddly, his instruments showed that it was producing exactly 220 Volts and exactly 50 Hz, the European standard. In the background, his assistant could be heard saying; "Should I turn it up a little more."

Another victim of this scam spent considerable time and money building a beautiful Aluminum and magnet unit to the plans he had purchased. He then made a video as he started it of the first time. There was only a small movement as the magnets aligned and then nothing.

Some conspiracy theorists even claim that power generating plants are elaborate hoaxes and that the utilities actually use Tesla devices to generate free electricity. I have been in enough hydro-electric facilities and seen enough of the power distribution system to know that generating plants are very real and there is no free power generation.