



PA ENERGY CONSUMER BILL OF RIGHTS



A PUBLICATION OF THE PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

As a residential PA energy customer, you have both rights and responsibilities that ensure fair dealings between you and your utility company. The PUC is here to help.

Your rights include:

- Safe and reliable utility service
- Fair credit and security deposit policies
- The ability to question and dispute your bill's accuracy with the utility
- The option to file a complaint with the PUC

Your utility company has the responsibility to honor all of these rights. You, the customer, should know your rights and fulfill your responsibilities to maintain your utility service.

Your responsibilities include:

- Paying your bill on time
- Providing the utility with access to their meter
- Giving at least seven days advance notice before moving or discontinuing service

Right to Safe and Reliable Utility Service

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Code requires that every public utility create and maintain adequate, efficient, safe and reasonable service and facilities. Utilities also are required to make necessary repairs and improvements to service and facilities. Services should be reasonably continuous and without unreasonable interruptions or delay.



Choosing an Electric or Natural Gas Supplier

As a Pennsylvanian, you may be able to choose your electric generation supplier and natural gas supplier in areas where competitive supplies are offered. Consumers may be able to secure supply rates below the prices offered by their utility. Consumers are encouraged to proactively engage competitive suppliers – unregulated by the PUC – to obtain pricing information for the generation portion of their bill. Competitive offers may not be available in all areas.

Your other rights in the competitive energy marketplace:

- The right to a “price to compare” from both the utility and competitive supplier so you are able to make an “apples-to-apples” comparison.
- The right to receive the benefits of new services, technological advances, improved efficiency and competitive prices.
- The right to be protected from unfair, deceptive, fraudulent and anti-competitive practices of providers of electric and natural gas service.
- The right to expect that the quality, reliability and maintenance of your electric and natural gas distribution service should not change and is still monitored by the PUC.
- The right to unbiased, accurate and understandable information to help shop for power and to save money in the deregulated environment. The PUC has practical tips on its website that you can use to reduce your energy usage: <http://www.puc.state.pa.us/general/consumereducation.aspx>.

For more information and a list of suppliers, see the PUC's website at www.puc.state.pa.us and the state Office of Consumer Advocate's Electric Shopping Guide and Natural Gas Shopping Guide at: <http://www.oca.state.pa.us> or call the Office of Consumer Advocate at 1-800-684-6560.

Filing Complaints

As a customer, you have the right to information regarding your rates, terms and conditions of service. You have the right to receive accurate bills for services you authorize. You also have the right to a fair and prompt resolution of problems you encounter with the utility. If you have a billing or service dispute with your utility, you must try to work it out with the company first. If you cannot resolve your issue with the utility, then you have the option to file a complaint with the Commission. Please see the Commission's website for more detailed information on filing informal or formal complaints: <http://www.puc.state.pa.us/general/filecomplaints.aspx>, or call the PUC at 1-800-692-7380.

Energy Assistance

Most utilities have assistance programs to help their customers in need, although resources are limited. First, contact your utility, which will work with you and refer you to programs that may help you, depending on your income or hardship situation. For more information, call the PUC at 1-800-692-7380 and see the Energy Assistance section of our website at: http://www.puc.state.pa.us/general/consumer_ed/energy_asst_progs.aspx.

Low-income consumers may also qualify for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). For information regarding LIHEAP Cash and Crisis benefits and Weatherization programs please call your local County Assistance Office or the state Department of Public Welfare at: 1-800-692-7462.

Termination Rights

Your utility company can **SHUT OFF** your service if you **FAIL** to:

- Pay your bill
- Follow through on payment arrangements
- Pay a deposit when required
- Allow the company access to its equipment

Before your service is shut off, your utility company will take the following steps:

- Send you a 10-day notice. Once you get the notice, the utility company has up to 60 days to shut off your service.
- **ATTEMPT** to contact you, either once in person or on two different days by phone, three days before your shut-off date
- From December 1 through March 31, if your utility company cannot reach you at the time of termination, they will leave a 48-hour notice at your residence.

For more detailed information on your rights and responsibilities as a utility customer – including shut-offs, medical certifications, winter terminations and reconnections – please see the Commission's Responsible Utility Customer Protection Act fact sheet at: http://www.puc.state.pa.us/general/consumer_ed/pdf/Act201.pdf. Or call the PUC at 1-800-692-7380.

Privacy

Consumers have the right to personal privacy. The utilities have the responsibility of safeguarding their customers' personal information and prevention against unauthorized use of this information.

For further information, contact the Public Utility Commission:

Write

PA Public Utility Commission
Bureau of Consumer Services
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, Pa 17105-3265

Visit our website:

www.puc.state.pa.us

Call

1-800-692-7380
For people with speech
or hearing loss, dial 7-1-1
(Telecommunications Relay
Service)

