



(4) The utility will not make oral representations of service termination for nonpayment when termination would occur on a known “no-cut” day as governed by the temperature moratorium.

(5) Weather Provisions. Discontinuance of gas and electric service to all residential users, including all residential tenants of apartment buildings, for nonpayment of bills where gas or electricity is used as the source of space heating or to control or operate the only space heating equipment at the residence is prohibited –

(A) On any day when the National Weather Service local forecast between 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m., for the following twenty-four (24) hours predicts that the temperature will drop below thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit (32°F); or

(B) On any day when utility personnel will not be available to reconnect utility service during the immediately succeeding day(s) (Period of Unavailability) and the National Weather Service local forecast between 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. predicts that the temperature during the Period of Unavailability will drop below thirty-two degrees Fahrenheit (32°F); or

(C) From November 1 through March 31, for any registered low income elderly or low income disabled customer (as defined in this rule), provided that such customer has entered into a cold weather rule payment plan, made the initial payment required by section (10) of this rule and has made and continues to make payments during the effective period of this rule that are at a minimum the lesser of fifty percent (50%) of –

1. The actual bill for usage in that billing period; or

2. The levelized payment amount agreed to in the cold weather rule payment plan. Such reductions in payment amounts may be recovered by adjusting the customer’s subsequent levelized payment amounts for the months following March 31; and

(D) Nothing in this section shall prohibit a utility from establishing a higher temperature threshold below which it will not discontinue utility service.

(6) Discontinuance of Service. From November 1 through March 31, a utility may not discontinue heat-related residential utility service due to nonpayment of a delinquent bill or account provided –

(A) The customer contacts the utility and states his/her inability to pay in full;

(B) The utility receives an initial payment and the customer enters into a payment agreement both of which are in compliance with section (10) of this rule;

(C) The customer complies with the utility’s requests for information regarding the customer’s monthly or annual income; and

(D) There is no other lawful reason for discontinuance of utility service.

(7) Whenever a customer, with a cold weather rule payment agreement, moves to another residence within the utility’s service area, the utility shall permit the customer to receive service if the customer pays in full the amounts that should have been paid pursuant to the agreement up to the date service is requested, as well as, amounts not included in a payment agreement that have become past due. No other change to the terms of service to the customer by virtue of the change in the customer’s residence with the exception of an upward or downward adjustment to payments necessary to reflect any changes in expected usage between the old and new residence shall be made.

(8) Deposit Provisions. A utility shall not assess a new deposit or bill deposits that were previously assessed during or after the period of this rule to those customers who enter into a payment agreement and make timely payments in accordance with this rule.

(9) Reconnection Provisions. If a utility has discontinued heat-related utility service to a residential customer due to nonpayment of a delinquent account, the utility, from November 1 through March 31, shall reconnect service to that customer without requiring a deposit; provided –

(A) The customer contacts the utility, requests the utility to reconnect service, and states an inability to pay in full;

(B) The utility receives an initial payment and the customer enters into a payment agreement both of which are in compliance with section (10) of this rule;

(C) The customer complies with the requests of the utility for information regarding the customer’s monthly or annual income;

(D) None of the amount owed is an amount due as a result of unauthorized interference, diversion, or use of the utility’s service, and the customer has not engaged in such activity since last receiving service; and

(E) There is no other lawful reason for continued refusal to provide utility service.

(10) Payment Agreements. The payment agreement for service under this rule shall comply with the following:

(A) A pledge of an amount equal to any payment required by this section by the agency which administers LIHEAP shall be deemed to be the payment required. The utility shall confirm in writing the terms of any payment agreement under this rule, unless the extension granted the customer does not exceed two (2) weeks.

(B) Payment Calculations.

1. The utility shall first offer a twelve- (12-) month budget plan which is designed to cover the total of all preexisting arrears, current bills, and the utility’s estimate of the ensuing bills.

2. If the customer states an inability to pay the budget plan amount, the utility and the customer may upon mutual agreement enter into a payment agreement which allows payment of preexisting arrears over a reasonable period in excess of twelve (12) months. In determining a reasonable period of time, the utility and the customer shall consider the amount of the arrears, the time over which it developed, the reasons why it developed, the customer’s payment history, and the customer’s ability to pay.

3. A utility shall permit a customer to enter into a payment agreement to cover the current bill plus arrearages in fewer than twelve (12) months if requested by the customer.

4. The utility may revise the required payment in accordance with its budget or levelized payment plan.

5. If a customer defaults on a cold weather rule payment agreement but has not yet had service discontinued by the utility, the utility shall permit such customer to be reinstated on the payment agreement if the customer pays in full the amounts that should have been paid pursuant to the agreement up to the date service is requested, as well as, amounts not included in a payment agreement that have become past due.

(C) Initial Payments.

1. For a customer who has not defaulted on a payment plan under the cold weather rule, the initial payment shall be no more than twelve percent (12%) of the twelve- (12-) month



budget bill amount calculated in subsection (10)(B) of this rule unless the utility and the customer agree to a different amount.

2. For a customer who has defaulted on a payment plan under the cold weather rule, the initial payment shall be an amount equal to eighty percent (80%) of the customer's balance, unless the utility and customer agree to a different amount.

(11) If a utility refuses to provide service pursuant to this rule and the reason for refusal of service involves unauthorized interference, diversion, or use of the utility's service situated or delivered on or about the customer's premises, the utility shall maintain records concerning the refusal of service which, at a minimum, shall include: the name and address of the person denied reconnection, the names of all utility personnel involved in any part of the determination that refusal of service was appropriate, the facts surrounding the reason for the refusal and any other relevant information.

(12) The commission shall recognize and permit recovery of reasonable operating expenses incurred by a utility because of this rule.

(13) A utility may apply for a variance from this rule by filing an application for variance with the commission pursuant to the commission's rules of procedure. A utility may also file for commission approval of a tariff or tariffs establishing procedures for limiting the availability of the payment agreements under section (10) of this rule to customers residing in households with income levels below one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the federal poverty level, and for determining whether, and under what circumstances, customers who have subsequently defaulted on a new payment plan calculated under paragraph (10)(C)2. should be required to pay higher amounts toward delinquent installments owed under that payment plan.

(14) This section only applies to providers of natural gas services to residential customers. Other providers of heat-related utility services will continue to provide such service under the terms of sections (1) through (13) of this rule. The provisions of sections (1) through (13) of this rule continue to apply to providers of natural gas service except where inconsistent with the terms of this section.

(A) From November 1 through March 31, notwithstanding paragraph (10)(C)2. of this rule to the contrary, a gas utility shall restore service upon initial payment of the lesser of fifty percent (50%) or five hundred dollars (\$500) of the preexisting arrears, with the deferred balance to be paid as provided in subsection (10)(B). Any reconnection fee, trip fee, collection fee, or other fee related to reconnection, disconnection, or collection shall also be deferred. Between November 1 and March 31, any customer threatened with disconnection may retain service by entering into a payment plan as described in this section. Any payment plan entered into under this section shall remain in effect (as long as its terms are adhered to) for the term of the payment plan, which shall be twelve (12) months' duration, unless the customer requests a shorter period or the utility agrees to a longer period. However, a gas utility shall not be required to offer reconnection or retention of service under this subsection (14)(A) more than once every two (2) years for any customer or to any customer who has defaulted on a payment plan under this section three (3) or more times.

(B) Any customer who is not disconnected or in receipt of a disconnect notice shall, at the customer's request, be permitted to enroll immediately in a gas utility's equal payment,

budget-billing, or similar plan. Any current bill or existing arrearage at the time of enrollment shall be dealt with consistent with paragraphs (10)(B)1. through (10)(B)4. of this rule, provided that the customer agrees to make the initial payment prescribed in paragraph (10)(C)1. or subsection (14)(A) as applicable.

(C) If a customer enters into a cold weather rule payment plan under this section:

1. Late payment charges shall not be assessed except with respect to failure to make timely payments under the payment plan; and

2. The gas utility shall not charge customers interest on the account balance for any deferral period.

(D) Any customer who enters into a cold weather rule payment agreement under this section and fully complies with the terms of the payment plan shall be treated, going forward, as not having defaulted on any cold weather rule payment agreement.

(E) A gas utility shall describe the provisions of section (14) in any notices or contacts with customers. In telephone contacts with customers expressing difficulty paying their gas bills, gas utilities shall inform those customers of their options under section (14).

(F) A gas utility shall be permitted to recover the costs of complying with this section as follows:

1. The cost of compliance with this section shall include any reasonable costs incurred to comply with the requirements of this section;

2. No gas utility shall be permitted to recover costs under this section that would have been incurred in the absence of this section, provided that the costs calculated in accordance with paragraph (14)(F)1. shall be considered costs of complying with this section;

3. Any net cost resulting from this section as of June 30 each year shall accumulate interest at the utility's annual short-term borrowing rate until such times as it is recovered in rates; and

4. No bad debts accrued prior to the effective date of this section may be included in the costs to be recovered under this section, provided that a gas utility may continue to calculate and defer for recovery through a separate Accounting Authority Order the costs of complying with the commission's January 1, 2006 emergency amendment to this rule upon the same terms as set forth herein. The costs eligible for recovery shall be the unpaid charges for new service received by the customer subsequent to the time the customer is retained or reconnected by virtue of this section plus the unpaid portion of the difference between the initial payment paid under this section and the initial payment that could have been required from the customer under the previously enacted payment provisions of section (10) of this rule, as measured at the time of subsequent disconnection for nonpayment or expiration of the customer's payment plan.

(G) A gas utility shall be permitted to defer and recover the costs of complying with this rule through a one- (1-) term Accounting Authority Order until such time as the compliance costs are included in rates as part of the next general rate proceeding or for a period of two (2) years following the effective date of this amendment.

1. The commission shall grant an Accounting Authority Order, as defined below, upon application of a gas utility, and the gas utility may book to Account 186 for review, audit and recovery all incremental expenses incurred and incremental revenues that are caused by this section. Any such Accounting Authority Order shall be effective until September 30, of each