



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 4901:1-13-09 Fraudulent practice, tampering, and theft of gas service.

Effective: September 18, 2023

(A) Disconnection of service for tampering or unauthorized reconnection.

(1) A gas or natural gas company may disconnect service without prior notice to a customer when either of the following occurs:

(a) The gas service meter, metering equipment, or associated property was damaged, interfered with, displaced, bypassed, or otherwise tampered with by a customer, consumer, or other person.

(b) A person not authorized by the gas or natural gas company has reconnected service.

(2) Each gas or natural gas company that has disconnected service under this paragraph shall tag or seal the customer's meter and hand-deliver written notice to the customer or consumer at the service location. If neither the customer nor an adult consumer is present, the gas or natural gas company shall attach a prominent written notice to a conspicuous place on the premises. When a gas or natural gas company reasonably believes that tagging or sealing the meter, hand delivering notice, or posting notice may jeopardize employee safety, it may promptly send notice, to the customer and consumer if the customer is not located at the service location. The notice shall include the following information:

(a) An explanation that service was disconnected because either the meter, metering equipment and/or gas or natural gas company property was tampered with, or a person not authorized by the gas or natural gas company reconnected the customer's service.

(b) The gas or natural gas company's telephone number and notice that the customer may contest the disconnection by requesting an opportunity to discuss the matter with a company representative.

(c) An explanation that, if the customer does not contest the disconnection, the gas or natural gas company is not required to restore service until the customer has provided satisfactory assurances



that such tampering or unauthorized reconnection has ceased and has paid or made satisfactory arrangements to pay the company an amount that the company calculates for unmetered service, any defaulted amount, any damage to company equipment or meter, any security deposit (consistent with rules 4901:1-13-08 and 4901:1-17-05 of the Administrative Code), and any tariffed reconnection and investigation charges.

(d) A statement that:

"If your complaint is not resolved after you have called (name of utility), or for general utility information, residential and business customers may contact the public utilities commission of Ohio (PUCO), toll-free at 1-800-686-7826 from eight a.m. to five p.m. weekdays, or visit <http://www.puco.ohio.gov>. Hearing or speech impaired customers may contact the PUCO via 7-1-1- (Ohio relay service).

The Ohio consumers' counsel (OCC) represents residential utility customers in matters before the PUCO. The OCC can be contacted at 1-877-742-5622 from eight a.m. to five p.m. weekdays, or visit <http://www.pickocc.org>."

(3) If the customer contests the disconnection, the company shall timely mail or deliver its decision to the customer. If the company's decision is that service can be reconnected, the company may notify the customer by telephone to arrange for reconnection.

(B) Disconnection of service for fraudulent practice.

(1) A gas or natural gas company may disconnect service, after providing notice to the customer pursuant to this paragraph, when a customer uses any fraudulent practice to obtain or maintain service. Before it may disconnect service for a fraudulent practice, each gas or natural gas company shall provide a written notice to the customer or consumer at the service location.

(2) The notice shall include the following information:

(a) A description of the alleged fraudulent practice.



(b) The gas or natural gas company telephone number and notice that the customer may contest the company's findings by requesting an opportunity to discuss the matter with a company representative.

(c) An explanation that the gas or natural gas company may disconnect service in either of the following circumstances:

(i) The customer does not contact the gas or natural gas company to contest the findings of fraudulent practice within three business days after receiving this notice.

(ii) The customer does not provide a satisfactory explanation to the company.

(d) An explanation that, if service is disconnected, the gas or natural gas company is not required to reconnect service until the customer pays or makes satisfactory arrangements to pay the company the bill for service that was fraudulently obtained or maintained, any security deposit (consistent with rules 4901:1-13-08 and 4901:1-17-05 of the Administrative Code), and any tariffed reconnection and investigation charges.

(e) A statement that:

"If your complaint is not resolved after you have called (name of utility), or for general utility information, residential and business customers may contact the public utilities commission of Ohio (PUCO), toll-free at 1-800-686-7826 from eight a.m. to five p.m. weekdays, or visit <http://www.puco.ohio.gov>. Hearing or speech impaired customers may contact the PUCO via 7-1-1 (Ohio Relay Service).

The Ohio consumers' counsel (OCC) represents residential utility customers in matters before the PUCO. The OCC can be contacted at 1-877-742-5622 from eight a.m. to five p.m. weekdays, or visit <http://www.pickocc.org>."

(3) A gas or natural gas company may terminate service for a fraudulent practice when the customer fails to contest the disconnection with the company within three business days after delivery of the written notice required by this rule. Should the customer contest the notice and fail to satisfy the



claims of fraud, the company may terminate service two business days after the customer receives the gas or natural gas company's written adverse decision regarding the matter. Notice of actual disconnection shall be left for the customer or consumer at the service location in a conspicuous location. When a company reasonably believes that posting the notice of actual disconnection may jeopardize employee safety, it shall promptly mail the notice, return receipt requested, to the customer and consumer (if the customer is not located at the service location).

(C) Each gas or natural gas company shall maintain records which include the basis for its decision to disconnect service for tampering, unauthorized reconnection, or fraudulent practice.