



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 4901:1-13-11 Gas or natural gas company customer billing and payments.

Effective: August 5, 2021

(A) This rule applies to all gas or natural gas company bills, including those issued on behalf of any retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator. Gas or natural gas companies shall make dual billing and consolidated billing available to retail natural gas suppliers and governmental aggregators.

(B) Bills issued by or for the gas or natural gas company shall be accurate and rendered at monthly intervals and shall contain clear and understandable form and language. Each bill shall display all of the following information:

(1) The customer's name, billing address, service address, account number, and, if applicable, the retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator account number.

(2) The gas or natural gas company's name and its payment address.

(3) The gas or natural gas company's twenty-four hour, local or toll-free telephone number for reporting service emergencies.

(4) A statement that customers with bill questions or complaints should call or write the gas or natural gas company first. The bill shall list the gas or natural gas company's local or toll-free telephone number(s) and the address where a question or complaint may be sent.

(5) The following text:

"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) for assistance at 1-800-686-7826 (toll free) from eight a.m. to five p.m. weekdays, or at <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 (toll free) from eight a.m. to five p.m. weekdays, or at <http://www.pickocc.org>."

- (6) The identification of the applicable rate schedule.
- (7) The dates of the service period covered by the bill.
- (8) The billing determinants, if applicable:
 - (a) Beginning meter reading(s).
 - (b) Ending meter reading(s).
 - (c) Multiplier(s).
 - (d) Consumption(s).
 - (e) Fixed monthly customer charge.
- (9) The rate for purchase of the gas or natural gas commodity, expressed in dollars and cents per Mcf or Ccf, reflecting either of the following:
 - (a) The gas cost recovery rate.
 - (b) The rate for the commodity service, if the company has been granted an exemption under section 4929.04 of the Revised Code.
- (10) The total charge attributable to the rate for purchase of the gas or natural gas commodity, expressed in dollars and cents, reflecting either of the following:
 - (a) The gas cost recovery rate.



(b) The rate for the commodity sales service, if the company has been granted an exemption under section 4929.04 of the Revised Code.

(11) If applicable, the name of the retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator in close proximity to the retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator commodity charges, as well as a toll-free or local telephone number and address for customer billing questions or complaints regarding retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator charges.

(12) The total charge attributable to the gross receipts tax, expressed in dollars and cents, and the gross receipts tax rate. This requirement only applies to gas or natural gas companies that allow for competitive retail natural gas services on their system.

(13) The following prominently displayed price to compare statement on residential and small commercial customer bills, if the company has a choice program:

"When shopping for a natural gas supplier, it may be useful to compare supplier offers with the standard choice offer (SCO) rate [or, if applicable, the gas cost recovery (GCR) rate] available to eligible customers, which varies monthly based on the market price of natural gas. Price represents one feature of any offer; there may be other features which you consider of value. More information about the SCO [or GCR, if applicable] and other suppliers offers is available at energychoice.ohio.gov or by contacting the PUCO."

(14) The identification of estimated bills.

(15) The due date for payment.

(16) The total charges for the current billing period.

(17) Any late payment charge or gross and net charges, if applicable.

(18) Any unpaid amounts due from previous bills, customer credits, and total amounts due and payable.



(19) The current balance of the account, if the residential customer is billed according to a budget plan.

(20) The current gas and electric charges separately, if the customer is billed for gas and electric service on the same bill.

(21) If applicable, each charge for a service that is either nontariffed or nonregulated and, with regard to services that are, the name and toll-free telephone number of each provider of service.

(22) Any nonrecurring charge(s).

(23) Any payment(s) or credit(s) applied to the account during the current billing period.

(24) If applicable, all the percentage of income payment plan plus (PIPP plus) billing information:

(a) Current PIPP plus payment.

(b) PIPP plus payments defaulted (i.e., past due).

(c) Total PIPP plus amount due.

(d) Total account arrearage.

(e) Any other information required to implement the PIPP plus program under Chapter 4901:1-18 of the Administrative Code.

(25) An explanation of codes and abbreviations used.

(26) If a customer's selected retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator bills separately for its supplier charges, the supplier's name and a statement that such supplier is responsible for billing the gas supplier charges and such supplier will separately bill the customer for that component of natural gas service.



(27) The customer's historical consumption during each of the preceding twelve months, with a total and average consumption for such twelve-month period, if the company has a choice program.

(28) A statement, either appearing directly on the bill, in a bill insert, or as a separate mailing, of any payment arrangement agreed upon by the customer and the company.

(29) Other information required by Ohio law or commission rule or order.

(C) All bills shall be due no earlier than fourteen days from the date of the postmark on the bill. If the bill is sent electronically, the bill shall not be due earlier than fourteen days from the date of the electronic postmark on the bill. If the bill is mailed by means that does not place a postmark on the bill (i.e., such as permit mailing), the bill shall not be due earlier than fourteen days from the date on the actual bill. All bills mailed without postmarks shall be mailed no later than the day listed on the bill. For residential bills being issued from outside the state of Ohio, the due date shall be no less than seventeen days from the date on the actual bill.

(D) A gas or natural gas company proposing any new bill format shall file its proposed bill format with the commission for approval. If the commission does not act upon an application for a new bill format approval within forty-five days, the proposed bill format shall automatically be approved on the forty-sixth day.

(E) Payment methodologies and parameters.

(1) Each gas or natural gas company shall make payment options available to customers.

(a) Payment options may include, but are not limited to: cash, check, or money order payments in person to the company or a payment agent; check or money order through the mail; check over the telephone; credit card; or electronic money transfers.

(b) Each gas or natural gas company shall, upon request, provide customers with an updated list of its available payment options and descriptions thereof, and shall post the updated list on its website.



(c) The list of available payment options shall include the name and street address/location of the nearest payment center and/or local authorized agent, and all applicable fees for utilizing the various methods available for payment of customer bills.

(d) The gas or natural gas company may not deny a customer the use of one or more of the payment options solely because the customer's account is in arrears.

(2) If a gas or natural gas company accepts payments from customers via authorized agents, the company shall provide signage to the authorized agent with its logo, or other appropriate indicators, that affirm the payment location as an authorized agent of the gas or natural gas company.

(3) Each gas or natural gas company shall not charge more than two dollars for processing payments by cash, check, or money order at authorized agent locations. Customers may not be charged for processing their payments by check or money order through the mail. Customers may be charged for processing their payments by check over the telephone, by credit card, or electronic money transfers and such charges will be evaluated by the commission.

(4) When a customer pays the bill at the gas or natural gas company's business office or to an authorized agent of the company, the payment, including any partial payment, shall be immediately credited to the customer's account where feasible, and, in any event, be credited to the customer's account as of the date received at the business office or by the agent. When payment is received at the company's business office through other means, such as by mail or on line, the payment shall be posted immediately upon receipt to the customer's account, where feasible, and in any event, be credited to the customer's account on the date received.

(5) No gas or natural gas company shall disconnect service to a customer who pays the total amount due (or an amount agreed upon between the gas or natural gas company and the customer to prevent disconnection) on the account by the close of business on the disconnection date listed on the disconnection notice. Payment received by an authorized agent of the gas or natural gas company shall constitute receipt of payment by the company.

(6) Each gas or natural gas company shall establish a written policy for its personnel at its business offices and for its authorized agents to handle billing disputes, requests for payment arrangements,



and for the reporting of payments made by customers due to their receipt of a disconnection notice, in order to prevent disconnection of service. If such matters cannot be handled by an agent authorized to accept payments, the agent shall provide customers with the gas or natural gas company's local or toll-free telephone number.

(7) When applicable, a supplier agreement between a gas or natural gas company and a retail natural gas supplier must provide that if the gas or natural gas company collects customer payments on behalf of the retail natural gas supplier, then customer's liability to the retail natural gas supplier ceases to the extent of a payment made and applicable to the customer's retail natural gas supplier account.

(F) Any gas or natural gas company that issues billing statements electronically shall comply with each of the following requirements:

(1) A customer receiving a billing statement electronically shall not be required to pay that bill electronically or pay electronically any future bill statements. All payment methods shall continue to be available to the customer.

(2) No enrollment or usage fees shall be assessed to a customer who chooses to receive bills and/or customer information electronically.

(3) The electronic billing statement shall include all requirements listed in paragraph (B) of this rule.

(4) The gas or natural gas company shall maintain a secure and encrypted internet location that is to be accessed only by the customer of record after completing a secure registration process.

(5) Any fees to accept electronic payments shall be clearly disclosed in payment window(s).

(6) Any payment made electronically shall be treated as a payment made at the company business office and shall be posted to the account in accordance with paragraph (E)(4) of this rule. The time needed to post the payment to the account shall be clearly stated.

(G) Handling partial payments.



(1) Nonconsolidated bills. Each gas or natural gas company shall credit any customer's partial payments in the following order:

- (a) First, credit past due distribution and sales service charges.
- (b) Second, credit current distribution and sales service charges.
- (c) Third, credit past due and current nonregulated or nontariffed charges.

(2) Consolidated bills. Partial payments applied towards any past due amount on a bill or the balance due on a disconnection notice must be apportioned in the following order:

- (a) First, credit past due gas or natural gas company service and delivery charges.
- (b) Second, credit current gas or natural gas company service and delivery charges.
- (c) Third, credit retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator charges.

If the customer pays the entire amount past due or more, any amount paid over the amount past due shall be applied first to gas or natural gas company service and delivery charges.

(3) Budget billing payments and payments in full of the undisputed amount related to a bona fide dispute do not constitute partial payments. Payments made on accounts for which there is a bona fide dispute shall be credited to the undisputed portion of the account

(H) Any billing adjustments shall be made according to paragraph (G) of rule 4901:1-13-04 of the Administrative Code.

(I) Transfer of customer billing information.

(1) The nonbilling retail natural gas supplier shall furnish the applicable required bill content information to the billing party in a timely manner and in a mutually agreed upon electronic format



for inclusion in the consolidated customer bill.

(2) The billing gas or natural gas company shall include in the consolidated bill all required bill content information furnished by the nonbilling retail natural gas supplier.

(3) An entity ordered by the commission to provide any bill content, message, insert, or notice remains responsible to provide such information to its customers, although the information may be provided through the consolidated bill.

(J) Except in cases where the gas or natural gas company is engaging in a purchase of receivables program, when a customer switches from a retail natural gas supplier, the gas or natural gas company shall identify for the customer and state on the bill the date after which the billing party will no longer remit payments to the previous retail natural gas supplier and include any outstanding balance due the previous retail natural gas supplier.