



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 4901:1-18-06 Disconnection procedures for electric, gas, and natural gas utilities.

Effective: November 1, 2021

(A) If a residential customer is delinquent, as defined in paragraph (A) of rule 4901:1-18-04 of the Administrative Code, in paying for regulated services, the utility company may, after at least fourteen days' notice, disconnect the customer's service during normal utility company business hours in compliance with all of the following conditions.

(1) No disconnections for nonpayment shall be made after twelve-thirty p.m. on the day preceding a day on which all services necessary for the customer to arrange and the utility company to perform reconnection are not regularly performed.

(2) On the day of disconnection of service, the utility company shall provide the customer with personal notice. If the customer is not at home, the utility company shall provide personal notice to an adult consumer. If neither the customer nor an adult consumer is at home, the utility company shall attach written notice to the premises in a conspicuous location prior to disconnecting service.

(3) Third-party or guarantor notification.

(a) Each utility company shall permit a residential customer to designate a third party to receive notice of the pending disconnection of the customer's service and any other delinquent payment reminder notices sent to the customer. If the customer has a guarantor, the guarantor shall receive notice of the pending disconnection of the guaranteed customer's service and any other delinquent payment reminder notices sent to the guaranteed customer, pursuant to rule 4901:1-17-03 of the Administrative Code. The utility company shall notify the third party or the guarantor at least fourteen days prior to disconnecting the customer's service.

(b) The utility company shall inform the third party that his/her receipt of such notices does not constitute acceptance of any liability by the third party for payment for service provided to the customer unless the third party has also agreed, in writing, to be a guarantor for the customer.



(c) In compliance with division (E) of section 4933.12 and division (D) of section 4933.121 of the Revised Code, if the utility company plans to disconnect the residential utility service of a customer for the nonpayment of his/her bill, and that customer resides in an Ohio county in which the department of job and family services has provided the utility company with a written request for notification of residential service disconnection prior to the disconnection, then the utility company shall provide, during the period of the fifteenth of November to the fifteenth of April, the appropriate county department of job and family services with a listing, electronically if feasible, of those customers whose service will be disconnected for nonpayment. This information will include at a minimum, the customer's first name, middle initial, last name, service address, and county of residence, and shall be made available to the county department of job and family services simultaneous with the generation of any ten-day disconnection notices being distributed to customers. The county department of job and family services may use this information to assist customers in the payment of delinquent utility bills in an effort to avoid disconnection of service.

(d) Upon the request of a property owner or the agent of a property owner, each utility company shall provide the property owner or the agent of a property owner with at least three days' advance notice when service to his/her property is to be disconnected either at the request of a residential customer who is a tenant or for nonpayment.

(4) Utility company employees or agents of the utility company who disconnect service at the premises may or may not, at the discretion of the utility company, be authorized to make extended payment arrangements. Utility company employees or agents who disconnect service shall be authorized to complete one of the following:

(a) Accept payment in lieu of disconnection.

(b) Dispatch an employee to the premises to accept payment.

(c) Make available to the customer another means to avoid disconnection.

(5) The disconnection notice may be mailed separately or included on the regular monthly bill. If the notice is included on the regular monthly bill, it shall be prominently identified as a disconnection notice. The following information shall be clearly displayed either on the disconnection notice or in



documents accompanying the disconnection notice:

(a) The delinquent billing account number, the total amount required to prevent disconnection of the regulated services provided by the utility company, and/or any security deposit owed at the time of the notice.

(b) The earliest date when disconnection may occur.

(c) The local or toll-free number and address of the utility company's office for customers to contact about their account.

(d) The following statement:

"If you have a complaint in regard to this disconnection notice that can not be resolved after you have called (name of utility company), or for general utility company 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 consumer 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>."

(e) A statement that the customer's failure to pay the amount on the disconnection notice at the utility company's office or to one of its authorized agents before the date specified on the disconnection notice may require payment of a security deposit and a charge for reconnection. The statement shall also include the amount of the security deposit and the reconnection charge.

(f) If applicable, a statement that the failure to pay charges for nontariffed products or services may result in the loss of those products and/or services.

(g) An explanation of the payment plans and options available to a customer whose account is delinquent, as provided in this rule and rule 4901:1-18-05 of the Administrative Code, and



percentage of income payment plan (PIPP plus), pursuant to rule 4901:1-18-12 of the Administrative Code, and, when applicable, rule 4901:1-18-09 of the Administrative Code.

(h) If disconnection of service is to occur as a result of nonpayment, a statement that a medical certification program and forms are available from the utility company for customers or consumers where the disconnection of service would be especially dangerous to the health of those persons.

(i) A statement that a listing of the utility company's authorized payment agents is available by calling the utility company's toll-free customer service number.

(B) No utility company shall disconnect the service of a customer for nonpayment where the date of disconnection occurs within the period of November first through April fifteenth, unless the utility company completes each of the following:

(1) Makes contact with the customer or other adult consumer at the premises ten days prior to disconnection of service by personal contact, telephone, or hand-delivered written notice. Utility companies may also make contact by sending the notice by regular, U.S. mail; however, such notice must allow three calendar days for mailing. This additional notice shall extend the date of disconnection, as stated on the fourteen-day notice required by paragraph (A) of this rule, by ten additional days.

(2) Informs the customer or adult consumer that sources of federal, state, and local government aid for payment of utility bills and for home weatherization are available at the time the utility company delivers the notice required in paragraphs (A) or (B)(1) of this rule, and provides sufficient information to allow the customer to further pursue available assistance.

(3) Informs the customer of the right to enter into any of the payment plans set forth in paragraph (B) of rule 4901:1-18-05 of the Administrative Code, or to enroll in PIPP plus. If the customer does not respond to the notice described in paragraph (B)(1) of this rule, or refuses to accept a payment plan or fails to make the initial payment on a payment plan referenced in this paragraph, the utility company may disconnect service after the ten-day notice expires.

(C) Medical certification



(1) In accordance with the certification requirements of this rule, the utility company shall not disconnect residential service for nonpayment for either of the following situations:

(a) If the disconnection of service would be especially dangerous to the health of any consumer who is a permanent resident of the premises.

(b) When the disconnection of service would make operation of necessary medical or life-supporting equipment impossible or impractical.

(2) The medical condition or the need for medical or life-supporting equipment shall be certified to the utility company by a licensed physician, physician assistant, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse practitioner, certified nurse-midwife, or local board of health physician.

(3) The utility company shall act in accordance with the following medical certification requirements:

(a) Upon request of any residential consumer, the utility company shall provide a medical certification form to the customer or to any of the health care professionals identified in paragraph (C)(2) of this rule. The utility company shall use the medical certification form posted on the commission's website.

(b) The certification of the medical condition or the need for the medical or life-supporting equipment required by paragraph (C)(1) of this rule shall be in writing and shall include the name of the person to be certified; a statement that the person is a permanent resident of the premises in question; the name, business address, and telephone number of the certifying party; a statement of the need for the medical or life-supporting equipment, if applicable; and a signed statement by the certifying party that disconnection of service will be especially dangerous to the health of a permanent resident of the premises.

(c) Initial certification by the certifying party may be by telephone if written certification is forwarded to the utility company within seven calendar days.



- (d) Certification shall prohibit disconnection of service for thirty calendar days.
- (e) If a medical certificate is used to avoid disconnection, the customer shall enter into an extended payment plan prior to the end of the medical certification period or be subject to disconnection. The initial payment on the plan shall not be due until the end of the certification period.
- (f) If service has been disconnected for nonpayment within twenty-one calendar days prior to the certification of either a special danger to the health of a qualifying resident or the need for medical or life-supporting equipment, the utility company shall restore service to that residence once the certifying party provides the required certification to the utility company and the customer agrees to an extended payment plan.
- (g) If certification is provided to the utility company prior to three-thirty p.m., the utility company shall restore the customer's service within the same day. If the certification is received after three-thirty p.m., the utility company shall reconnect service by the earliest time possible on the following business day. Also, if the certification is received after three-thirty p.m. on a day that precedes a day on which all services necessary for the customer to arrange and the utility company to perform reconnection are not regularly performed, the utility company shall make an effort to restore service by the end of that day.
- (h) A consumer may renew the certification two additional times (thirty days each) by providing additional certificates to the utility company. The total certification period may not exceed ninety days per household in any twelve-month period.
- (4) The electric utility company shall give notice of availability of medical certification to its residential customers by means of bill inserts or special notices at the beginning of the winter heating period and at the beginning of the summer cooling period. The natural gas utility company shall give notice of the availability of medical certification to its residential customers by means of bill inserts or special notices at the beginning of the winter heating period.
- (5) If there is an outstanding balance for a returned check on the customer's account, the utility company may refuse the medical certification, so long as notice has been given to the customer in accordance with rules 4901:1-10-20 and 4901:1-13-09 of the Administrative Code. Such notice shall



also advise the customer that there is a returned check balance on the account and that the utility company may deny the customer's use of medical certificates if that balance is not paid.

(D) This provision is to address circumstances where an electric, gas, or natural gas utility company cannot gain access to disconnect service at a particular service location after receiving a request for disconnection from the customer of record.

(1) If the utility company is denied access to disconnect service, the utility company may subsequently disconnect the utility service in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (I) of rule 4901:1-18-03 of the Administrative Code.

(2) If the property in question is a multi-unit dwelling, then the electric, gas, or natural gas utility company shall comply with the provisions of rule 4901:1-18-08 of the Administrative Code.

(3) The customer of record requesting termination of service will not be financially responsible for the utility service consumed from the date of move-out, unless the customer of record is the individual who denied the utility company's access to disconnect service or the customer of record continues to reside at the premises. The utility company may require the customer to affirm in writing the date on which the customer vacated the premises.

(E) This provision is to address circumstances where an electric, gas, or natural gas utility company elects to leave the utility service on at a particular service location for the utility company's convenience after receiving a request for disconnection from the customer of record.

(1) If the new resident does not contact the utility company to establish service, the utility company may subsequently disconnect the utility service in accordance with the fraud provisions in paragraph (C) of rule 4901:1-10-20 of the Administrative Code (electric) and paragraph (C) of rule 4901:1-13-09 of the Administrative Code (gas and natural gas).

(2) Under the circumstance where the new resident becomes an applicant for service and is required to pay a deposit to establish financial responsibility, the utility company must advise the applicant of the date that the utility service may be disconnected for nonpayment of the deposit.



(3) Under either circumstance above where the new resident becomes a consumer of the electric, gas, or natural gas service that was left on by the utility company, the consumer will be financially responsible for the utility service consumed from the date of move-in.

(F) A landlord/property owner may elect to leave the utility service on at a particular service location for the landlord/property owner's convenience under the provisions of a landlord reversion agreement with the electric, gas, or natural gas utility.

(1) The landlord/property owner shall be given a copy of the relevant terms and conditions of the landlord reversion agreement, including specific terms identifying when the service will revert to the landlord/property owner's name, and any costs of such service.

(2) Under the circumstance where a new resident becomes an applicant for service and is required to pay a deposit to establish financial responsibility, the utility company must advise the applicant of the date that the utility service may be disconnected for nonpayment of the deposit.

(3) Under the circumstance where the new resident becomes a consumer of the electric, gas, or natural gas service that was left on by virtue of the landlord/reversion agreement, the consumer will be financially responsible for the utility service consumed from the date of move-in, as indicated in the terms of the lease agreement.

(G) Upon request of the customer, the utility company shall provide an opportunity for review of the initial decision to disconnect the service. The utility company shall review the circumstances surrounding the disconnection, escalate the review to an appropriate supervisor if requested, and inform the customer of the decision upon review as soon as possible. At the customer's request, the utility company shall respond in writing.

(H) The utility company when contacted by the commission's staff shall respond to an inquiry concerning an imminent disconnection or actual disconnection within one business day. At the request of commission staff, the utility company shall respond in writing. Commission staff will notify the customer of the utility company's response.

(I) The utility company shall include in its tariff its current standard practices and procedures for



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disconnection, including any applicable collection and reconnect charges. Any utility company proposing changes to its disconnection notice shall submit a copy to commission staff for review.