



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 4901:1-21-14 Customer billing and payments.

Effective: December 1, 2014

(A) This rule applies to competitive retail electric service (CRES) bills that do not include any electric utility charges. Requirements for consolidated billing appear in rule 4901:1-21-18 of the Administrative Code.

(B) A CRES provider may bill customers directly for competitive retail electric services or arrange for the electric utility to bill customers for such services according to a tariff approved by the commission.

(C) Residential and small commercial customer bills issued by or for CRES providers shall be accurate and understandable, be rendered at monthly intervals consistent with those of the customer's electric utility, and contain sufficient information for customers to compute and compare the total cost of competitive retail electric service(s). Such bills shall also include:

(1) The customer's name, billing address, service address, electric utility account number, and, if applicable, the CRES account number.

(2) The dates of service covered by the bill, an itemization of each type of competitive service covered by the bill, any related billing components, the charge for each type of service, and any other information the customer would need to recalculate the bill for accuracy.

(3) The applicable billing determinants, including beginning meter reading(s), ending meter reading(s), demand meter reading(s), multiplier(s), consumption(s), and demands.

(4) For customer generators with net-metering contracts, a statement of the net-metered generation.

(5) The unit price per kilowatt hour charged for competitive service, as calculated by dividing the current-period competitive service charges by the current-period consumption, or, if applicable, the flat-monthly rate.



- (6) An identification of the provider of each service appearing on the bill.
- (7) A notice in boldface type containing clear explanation for any change of providers, rates, terms, or conditions of service. Such notice shall appear on the first two consecutive bills following the occurrence of any such changes, excluding the first billing after the starting date of competitive retail electric service.
- (8) The amount billed for the current period, any unpaid amounts due from previous periods, any payments or credits applied to the customer's account during the current period, any late payment charges or gross and net charges, if applicable, any nonrecurring charges, and the total amount due and payable.
- (9) The due date for payment to keep the account current. Such due date shall be no less than:
 - (a) Fourteen calendar days after the postmark date on the bill for residential customers. For residential bills issued from outside the state of Ohio, the due date shall not be less than twenty-one calendar days after the postmark date.
 - (b) Twenty-one calendar days after the postmark date on the bill for nonresidential customers.
- (10) The current balance of the account, if a residential customer is billed according to a budget plan.
- (11) Options and instructions on how customers may make their payments.
- (12) For each provider whose charges appear on the bill, a listing of the provider's toll-free telephone number and address for customer billing questions or complaints.
- (13) The following notice:

"If your complaint is not resolved after you have called (name of CRES provider), 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>."

(14) The applicable electric utility's twenty-four hour local or toll-free numbers for reporting service emergencies.

(15) An identification of estimated bills or bills not based upon actual end-of-period meter readings for the period.

(16) An explanation of any codes and abbreviations used.

(D) If applicable, each CRES provider shall, upon request, provide customers with the name and street address/location of the nearest payment center and/or authorized payment agent.

(E) If applicable, when a customer pays the bill at a payment center or to an authorized payment agent, such payment shall be credited to the customer's account as of the day it is received by such payment center or agent.

(F) Each CRES provider shall establish policies and procedures for handling billing disputes and requests for payment arrangements.

(G) Each CRES provider shall credit any customer partial payments in the following order:

(1) Billed and past due CRES provider charges.

(2) Billed and due current CRES provider charges.

(3) Other past due and current non-regulated charges.



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 CRES provider wishing to issue billing statements online shall comply with the following guidelines:

- (1) A customer shall not be required to use online billing.
- (2) No enrollment or usage fees shall be assessed to a customer who chooses to receive bills and/or customer information online.
- (3) The online billing statement shall include all requirements listed in paragraph (C) of this rule.
- (4) The CRES provider shall maintain a secure and encrypted site that is to be accessed only by the customer of record after completing a secure registration process.
- (5) Any fees to accept online payments shall be clearly disclosed in payment window(s).
- (6) Any payment made online shall be treated as a payment made at the company's business office and shall be posted to the account in accordance with paragraph (E) of this rule. The time needed to post the payment to the account shall be clearly stated.
- (7) If a customer chooses to use online billing, the customer shall not be restricted to making payments online in the future. All payment methods shall continue to be available to the customer.