



Ohio Revised Code

Section 4929.22 Minimum service requirements.

Effective: June 26, 2001

Legislation: House Bill 9 - 124th General Assembly

For the protection of consumers in this state, the public utilities commission shall adopt rules under section 4929.10 of the Revised Code specifying the necessary minimum service requirements of a retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator subject to certification under section 4929.20 of the Revised Code regarding the marketing, solicitation, sale, or provision, directly or through its billing and collection agent, of any competitive retail natural gas service for which it is subject to certification. Rules adopted under this section shall include additional consumer protections concerning all of the following:

(A) Contract disclosure. The rules shall include requirements that a retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator subject to certification under section 4929.20 of the Revised Code do both of the following:

(1) Provide consumers with adequate, accurate, and understandable pricing and terms and conditions of service, including any switching fees, and with a document containing the terms and conditions of pricing and service before the consumer enters into the contract for service;

(2) Disclose the conditions under which a customer may rescind a contract without penalty.

(B) Service qualification and termination. The rules shall include a requirement that, before a consumer is eligible for service from a retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator subject to certification under section 4929.20 of the Revised Code, the consumer shall discharge, or enter into a plan to discharge, all existing arrearages owed to or being billed by the natural gas company from which the consumer presently is receiving service. The rules also shall provide for disclosure of the terms identifying how customers may switch or terminate service, including any required notice and any penalties.

(C) Minimum content of customer bills. The rules shall include all of the following requirements, which shall be standardized:



- (1) Price disclosure and disclosures of total billing units for the billing period and historical annual usage;
 - (2) To the maximum extent practicable, separate listing of each service component to enable a customer to recalculate its bill for accuracy;
 - (3) Identification of the supplier of each service;
 - (4) Statement of where and how payment may be made and provision of a toll-free or local customer assistance and complaint number for the retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator, as well as a consumer assistance telephone number or numbers for state agencies, such as the commission, the office of the consumers' counsel, and the attorney general's office, with the available hours noted;
 - (5) Other than for the first billing after the effective date of initial rules adopted pursuant to division (A) of section 4929.20 of the Revised Code, highlighting and clear explanation on each customer bill, for two consecutive billing periods, of any changes in the rates, terms, and conditions of service.
- (D) Disconnection and service termination, including requirements with respect to master-metered buildings. The rules shall include policies and procedures that are consistent with sections 4933.12 and 4933.122 of the Revised Code and the commission's rules adopted under those sections, and that provide for all of the following:
- (1) Coordination between suppliers for the purpose of maintaining service;
 - (2) The allocation of partial payments between suppliers when service components are jointly billed;
 - (3) A prohibition against switching, or authorizing the switching of, a customer's supplier of competitive retail natural gas service without the prior consent of the customer in accordance with appropriate confirmation practices, which may include independent, third-party verification procedures;



(4) A requirement of disclosure of the conditions under which a customer may rescind a decision to switch its supplier without penalty;

(5) Specification of any required notice and any penalty for early termination of contract.

(E) Minimum service quality, safety, and reliability.

(F) Customer information. The rules shall include requirements that a natural gas company make generic customer load pattern information available to a retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator as defined in division (K)(1) or (2) of section 4929.01 of the Revised Code on a comparable and nondiscriminatory basis, and make customer information available to a retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator as defined in division (K)(1) or (2) of section 4929.01 of the Revised Code on a comparable and nondiscriminatory basis unless, as to customer information, the customer objects. The rules shall ensure that each natural gas company provide clear and frequent notice to its customers of the right to object and of applicable procedures. The rules shall establish the exact language that shall be used in all such notices. The rules also shall require that, upon the request of a governmental aggregator defined in division (K)(1) of section 4929.01 of the Revised Code, solely for purposes of the disclosure required by division (D) of section 4929.26 of the Revised Code, or for purposes of a governmental aggregator defined in division (K)(2) of section 4929.01 of the Revised Code, a natural gas company or retail natural gas supplier must provide the governmental aggregator, in a timely manner and at such cost as the commission shall provide for in the rules, with the billing names and addresses of the customers of the company or supplier whose retail natural gas loads are to be included in the governmental aggregation.

(G) Ohio office. The rules shall require that a retail natural gas supplier maintain an office and an employee in this state.