

(2) Each gas utility, for every municipality in which it serves, shall provide in the respective telephone directories a telephone listing by which the utility can be notified during a 24-hour day of any utility service deficiency or emergency which may exist.

(3) Where a second language is common in a particular area served by the utility and so identified by the commission, all rules pertaining to billing and credit shall be available upon customer request for distribution in English and that second language in every business office of the utility in that area accessible to the public and where customer payments are received.

(4) Each utility shall provide written notice to its residential customers annually, and a written notice to all new residential customers, at a minimum, of the rules on deposits, payment options including deferred payment agreements and budget billing, disconnection and dispute procedures; of the availability of information on energy conservation practices, of the availability of a clear, concise record of the customer's actual natural gas consumption (or actual degree-day adjusted natural gas consumption) for each billing period during the prior 12 months or the actual number of months that the customer has lived at that location if less than 12 months, and of the availability of agencies or programs which may provide financial aid assistance or counseling; and contain a reply procedure to allow customers an opportunity to advise the utility of any special circumstances, such as the presence of infants or elderly persons or the use of human life sustaining equipment, and to advise the utility to contact a specific third party agency or individual prior to any disconnection action being taken.

History: 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59; renum. PSC 134.05 to be PSC 134.05 (1); cr. (2), Register, January, 1965, No. 109, eff. 2-1-65; am. (1), renum. (2) to be (3) and cr. (2) and (4), Register, January, 1975, No. 229, eff. 2-1-75; am. Register, March, 1979, No. 279, eff. 4-1-79; am. (4), Register, October, 1980, No. 298, eff. 11-1-80.

PSC 134.061 Deposits. (1) **NEW RESIDENTIAL SERVICE.** A utility shall not require a cash deposit or other guarantee as a condition of new service unless a customer has an outstanding account balance with the utility which accrued within the last 6 years, and which at the time of the request for new service remains outstanding and not in dispute. (See s. PSC 134.064.)

(2) **EXISTING RESIDENTIAL SERVICE.** A utility shall not require a cash deposit or other guarantee as a condition of continued service unless either or both of the following circumstances apply:

(a) The utility has shut off or discontinued the service of the customer within the last 12-month period for violation of the utility's filed rules or for nonpayment of a delinquent service account not currently in dispute.

(b) Subsequent credit information indicates that the initial application for service was falsified or incomplete to the extent that a deposit would be required under this section.

(3) **NEW COMMERCIAL SERVICE.** (a) If the credit of an applicant for service has not been established satisfactorily to the utility, the applicant may be required to deposit a sum not exceeding the estimated gross bills for any 2 consecutive billing periods selected by the utility.

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(b) In determining whether an applicant for service has satisfactorily established its credit, the utility shall consider the following factors before requiring a security deposit.

1. Credit information from credit reporting services;
2. Letter of credit from a financial institution or another utility;
3. Applicant's business characteristics, such as type of business, length of time the applicant has operated, the applicant's business experience and knowledge, and estimated size of the applicant's bills.
4. Assets of the business;
5. The financial condition of the business, as indicated in a financial statement.

(c) The utility shall notify the applicant within 30 days of the request for service as to whether a deposit will be required. The 30-day period shall begin from the date the applicant provides all requested relevant information to the utility. If no request for a deposit is made within this period, no deposit shall be required, except under the provisions of sub.

(4) (a). If a request for a deposit is made, the applicant must be given at least 20 days to provide payment, or guarantee, or to establish an installment payment agreement.

(d) The deposit of a commercial customer shall be refunded after 24 consecutive months of prompt payment. Payment is considered prompt if made prior to notice of disconnection for nonpayment not in dispute.

(4) EXISTING COMMERCIAL SERVICE. (a) An existing commercial customer may be required to furnish a deposit if the customer has not made prompt payment of all bills within the last 24 consecutive months.

(b) When the utility requests a deposit of an existing commercial customer, the customer shall have 20 days to provide the deposit, guarantee, or to establish an installment payment agreement.

(c) Refund of the deposit of an existing commercial customer shall be made in accordance with (3) (d).

(5) CONDITIONS OF DEPOSIT. The maximum deposit for a new commercial or residential account shall not exceed the highest estimated gross bill for any 2 consecutive billing periods selected by the utility.

The maximum deposit for an existing commercial or residential account shall not exceed the highest actual gross bill for any 2 consecutive months within the preceding 12 month review period as determined by the utility.

(6) INTEREST. Deposits for commercial or residential service shall bear interest of at least 8% payable from the date of deposit to the date of refund or discontinuance of service, whichever is earlier.

(7) ARREARAGES. An arrearage owed by a customer may be deducted from the customer's deposit under the following conditions:

(a) A deposit may be used by the utility to satisfy an arrearage occurring after the deposit was made.

(b) If the utility deducts an arrearage from a customer deposit, it may require the customer to bring the deposit up to its original amount. Failure of the customer to do so within 20 days of mailing a written request for payment is ground for disconnection.

(c) When a deposit is refunded to the customer, the utility may first deduct any arrearage owed by the customer, whether the arrearage arose prior to or after the date of the deposit.

(8) REVIEW. The utility shall review the payment record of each residential utility customer with a deposit on file at 12-month intervals. The utility shall not require or continue to require a cash deposit unless a deposit is required under the provisions of sub. (2).

(9) REFUND. Any deposit or portion thereof refunded to a commercial or residential customer shall be refunded by check unless both the customer and the utility agree to a credit on the regular billing, or unless sub. (10) applies.

(10) ACCRUED INTEREST. Upon termination of commercial or residential service, the deposit, with accrued interest, shall be credited to the final bill and the balance shall be returned promptly to the customer.

(11) WRITTEN EXPLANATION. A utility shall not require any commercial or residential customer to pay a deposit or establish a guarantee in lieu of deposit without explaining, in writing if requested, why that deposit is being required.

(12) REFUSAL OF SERVICE. Commercial or residential service may be refused or disconnected for failure to pay a deposit request subject to the rules pertaining to disconnection and refusal of service. (s. PSC 134.062).

(13) GUARANTEE TERMS AND CONDITIONS. (a) The utility may accept, in lieu of cash deposit, a contract signed by a guarantor satisfactory to the utility whereby payment of a specified sum not exceeding the cash deposit requirement is guaranteed. The term of such contract shall be for no longer than 2 years, but shall automatically terminate after the commercial or residential customer has closed its account with the utility, or at the guarantor's request upon 30 days' written notice to the utility.

(b) Upon termination of a guarantee contract or whenever the utility deems same insufficient as to amount of surety, a cash deposit or a new or additional guarantee may be required upon reasonable 20-day written notice to the customer. The service of any customer who fails to comply with these requirements may be disconnected upon 8 days' written notice, subject to sub. (14) for a residential customer or the establishment of an installment payment agreement for a commercial customer.

(c) The utility shall mail the guarantor copies of all disconnect notices sent to the customer whose account he has guaranteed unless the guarantor waives such notice in writing.

(14) DEFERRED PAYMENT. (a) In lieu of cash deposit or guarantee, an applicant for new residential service who has an outstanding account accrued within the last 6 years with the same utility shall have the right to receive service from that utility under a deferred payment agreement as defined in s. PSC 134.063 for the outstanding account.

(b) A commercial customer or applicant for commercial service of which a deposit is requested shall have the right to receive service under an installment payment agreement.

(15) **APPLICABILITY.** The rules in subs. (13) and (14) are not applicable to deposits or guarantees made in connection with the financing of extensions or other equipment.

History: Cr. Register, January, 1975, No. 229, eff. 2-1-75; am. Register, November, 1980, No. 299, eff. 12-1-80; renum. (7) to (14) to be (8) to (15), cr. (7), Register, April, 1985, No. 352, eff. 5-1-85.

PSC 134.062 Disconnection and refusal of service. (1) (a) In no circumstances will the cumulative time before notice of disconnection be less than 20 days after the date of issuance of the bill and an account may be deemed delinquent for the purpose of disconnection after such period has elapsed.

(b) At least 8 calendar days prior to disconnection, the utility shall give written disconnect notice upon a form which must be in the tariff of the utility filed with the public service commission and which conforms to the requirements of (8) unless excepted elsewhere.

(c) When a customer, either directly or through the public service commission, disputes a disconnection notice the utility shall investigate any disputed issue and shall attempt to resolve that issue by negotiation. During this investigation and negotiation, utility service shall not be disconnected over this matter.

(d) If a disputed issue cannot be resolved pursuant to s. PSC 134.064 (1), the utility shall inform the customer of the right to contact the public service commission.

(2) Utility service may be disconnected for any of the following reasons, provided that if the commission declares a winter emergency to be in effect, there must be reasonable grounds to believe that such disconnection will not, under the circumstances, endanger human health or life:

(a) Failure to pay a delinquent account or failure to comply with the terms of a deferred payment agreement (See s. PSC 134.063.).

(b) Violation of the utility's rules pertaining to the use of service in a manner which interferes with the service of others or to the operation of nonstandard equipment, if the customer has first been notified and provided with reasonable opportunity to remedy the situation.

(c) Failure to comply with deposit or guarantee arrangements as specified in s. PSC 134.061.

(d) Diversion of service around the meter.

(e) Connecting or having connected a natural gas outdoor lighting fixture as specified in PSC 136.02.

(f) Connecting or causing to be connected a device or use of gas considered to be a nonessential use of natural gas. This rule applies only to devices or purposes connected after the effective date of the rule as specified in PSC 136.05.

(g) Failure to comply with Wisconsin statute, commission rule, or order pertaining to conservation or availability of service.

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(h) Refusal or failure to permit authorized utility personnel to read the meter at least once every 6 months in order to determine actual usage. The six-month period begins with the date of the last meter reading.

(3) A public utility may disconnect utility service without notice where a dangerous condition exists for as long as the condition exists.

(4) Service may be denied to any customer for failure to comply with applicable requirements of this section, or of the utility's rules, or if a dangerous or unsafe condition exists on the customer's premises.

(5) Utility service may not be disconnected or refused for any of the following reasons:

(a) Nonpayment of a delinquent account over 6 months old where collection efforts have not been made within that period of time unless