

What is the disconnection rule, and how does it affect what we do?

The disconnection rule allows for services to consumers to be interrupted for nonpayment after proper notification has been completed.

Broad Overview of 3.300

Exceptions to Rule –

- Disconnection due to serious health or safety reasons.
- The bimonthly bill doesn't exceed \$50.00 dollars (exception cannot be used more than two cycles in 1 calendar year).
- The delinquent amount of the bill is more than 2 years old.
- Delinquency is the result of a dispute brought before the commission and the commission has advised the utility not to disconnect service.
- The delinquency is a result of a line extension or special construction charge.
- The disconnection would pose an immediate and serious hazard to the health of the consumer or family member in the consumer's residence.
- The consumer has not been given an opportunity to enter into a payment plan (rule 3.305) or the consumer has abided by the terms of an already established payment plan.

Disconnect of Rental Units –

- Verify whether a tenant resides in the unit of requested disconnection.
- If occupied the landlord request or delinquency by the landlord cannot be used to disconnect service until proper notification of tenants and all steps have been taken.
- See Full section 3.302(C) for in depth overview.

Budget Billing Plans – In accordance with 3.201 budget payment plans can be offered to customers of a primary residence.

Equal Treatment of Payments – All payments are to be treated in the same manner unless otherwise instructed. Payments are applied to the delinquent portion of the account prior to current bill unless written instruction from the customer, disputed bill, or payment arrangement instructs otherwise.

Household Rule – This covers the rules regarding people living in the same household, and how arrearages are assigned.

Reasonable Payment Arrangement – when establishing a PA the company will need to consider the income of the customer, payment history, size of the arrearage, current bill, reason for outstanding bill, and time frame for repayment.

Disconnection Notice –

Includes:

1. Statement of account delinquency and amount. Notice of disconnection of service.
2. Dates and times of disconnection if appropriate action is not taken.
3. Statement of reasonable repayment plan and if a question of reasonableness to request assistance from CAPI for further assistance.
4. Name, title, address, phone number, and business hours of company representative with whom the customer can inquire about disconnection.
5. Contact information and address for CAPI.
6. Itemized cost to the customer for disconnection, collection, restoration of service, deposit if applicable.
7. Between the months of November and March include a list of agencies which may provide assistance to the customer for paying utilities bills.
8. Offer of monthly installment plan for payment of future bills.
9. Statement about winter temperature/age of ratepayer disconnection exception.
10. Anything further required by the commission (Emergency Rule).

Winter Disconnections - This covers the rules from November through March for disconnection during temperatures below 32 degrees for households with someone 60 and over, when documented, and below 10 degrees for all other households within a specific time frame of the date of disconnection.

Notice Under Repayment Plan – Disconnection notice because of failure to abide by terms of repayment plan.

- Notice must contain the information required per 3.303(A)(1) and 3.303(B).
- If mailed must be deposited in a US post office at least 5 days prior to disconnection (mailed to location of service and billing address if different).
- If notice in person must be at least 72 hrs prior to disconnection.
- Utility can give notice orally in person or by telephone 72 hrs prior to disconnection.
- Substantial compliance with repayment plan 3.307(B) and 3.302 (B)(6) if the customer has paid at least 75 percent of agreed upon payment.
- Disconnection of service as a result of a broken repayment plan shall only occur after notice.

Time and Notice of Disconnection –

- Disconnection between 8a.m. to 2p.m. on a business day within 4 days of specified date on notice (between April & October).
- Within 8 days after specified date if between November and March.
- If the utility has personnel available for reconnection or arrangements on behalf of the utility until 8p.m. disconnection may occur between 8a.m. and 5p.m. on a business day.
- Individual disconnecting the service at the pole or premises must inform a responsible party at the residence of the disconnection of service or provide a notice on the premises not applicable.

Restoral of Service-

- The restoral must be made within 24hrs if repayment arrangement, full payment, instruction of the commission, cause of disconnection has been rectified.
- If half of delinquency is paid and 3 month payment arrangement has been made. Utility is not obligated to enter a plan of this type more than 2 times per customer in a calendar year.
- Overtime rates and other abnormal expenses for restoration shall be avoided.
- Non-recurring charges associated with disconnection and restoral of service shall not be prepaid by the customer for restoration. These will be billed for payment in 30 days unless part of PA.
- Medical note requires restoration within 24hrs.

3.308 Filing Requirements –

- Monthly file with PUC disconnection form for previous month. Includes
 - The # of bills forwarded to ratepayers
 - # of disconnection sent
 - The actual disconnections
 - Reconnections within 15 days of disconnection
 - # of PA entered
 - # of PA broken
 - Dollar amount of delinquencies which disconnections were made
- **Failure to file information within 6 months of the month being reported will result in the utility being restricted from disconnecting any customers until addressing matter with the PUC directly.**