

Utility Customer Bill of Rights

Established by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities



A PHI Company

The Utility Customers' Bill of Rights is a synopsis of the most frequently cited sections of the New Jersey Administrative Code Title 14, Chapter 3. The Utility Customers' Bill of Rights is not meant to replace the regulations contained in N.J.A.C. 14:3, but is intended to give the utility customer a concise, plain-language guide to the regulations. Any application of the Utility Customers' Bill of Rights must be consistent with the regulations as contained in N.J.A.C. 14:3.

- (1) You have the right to utility service if you are a qualified applicant.
- (2) You shall not be asked to pay unreasonably high deposits as a condition of service, nor to make unreasonable payments on past due bills.
- (3) You have the right to budget billing or payment plans if you are an electric or gas customer.
- (4) You are entitled to at least one deferred payment plan in one year.
- (5) You have the right to have any complaint against your utility handled promptly by that utility.
- (6) You have the right to call upon the New Jersey State Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to investigate your utility complaints and inquiries. Your service may not be terminated for non-payment of disputed charges during a BPU investigation.
- (7) If you suspect it is not working properly, you have the right to have your meter tested, free of charge, once a year by your utility. For a \$5 fee, the meter test will be conducted under the supervision of the staff of the BPU.

- (8) You have the right to a written notice of termination, ten days prior to the discontinuance of service.
- (9) Residential service may be shut off, after proper notice, Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. A utility may not shut off residential service on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, a holiday or the day before a holiday, or if a valid medical emergency exists in your household.
- (10) Winter Termination Program – If you are an elderly or low-income customer having financial problems paying your bill, you should request the company to enroll you in a budget plan in accordance with your ability to pay. You are required to make good faith payments of all reasonable bills for service and, in return, are assured of the right to have gas and electric utilities service from November 15 to March 15, without fear of termination of such service.
- (11) If you live in a multi-family dwelling, you have the right to receive posted notice of any impending shut off. This notice must be posted in a common area and/or sent individually to occupants.
- (12) You have the right to have a “diversion of service” investigation if you suspect that the level of consumption reflected in your utility bill is unexplainably high.
- (13) Service shall not be shut off for non-payment of repair charges, merchandise charges or yellow page charges, nor shall notice threatening such discontinuance be given.
- (14) You have the option of having a deposit refund applied to your account as a credit or of having the deposit refunded by separate check.

The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities can be reached toll-free at 1-800-624-0241.