

the emergency as evidenced in part by close and continuous communication with the utility.

(b) During the period service is continued under the provisions of this subsection, the customer shall be responsible for the cost of residential utility service. However, no action to disconnect that service will be undertaken until expiration of the period of continued service.

(c) If there is a dispute concerning an alleged existent medical emergency, either party shall have the right to an informal review by the public service commission staff. Pending a decision after informal review, residential utility service shall be continued, provided that the resident has submitted a statement or notice as set forth in par. (a) of this subsection.

(8) (a) A utility shall not disconnect service unless written notice by first class mail is sent to the customer or personally served at least 8 calendar days prior to the first date of the proposed disconnection. Notice shall be sent to the account name and address, and to the address where service is provided, if different. If disconnection is not accomplished on or before the 15th day after the first notice date, a subsequent notice must be left on the premises not less than 24 hours nor more than 48 hours prior to the disconnection.

(b) The utility shall make a reasonable effort to have a personal or telephone contact with the customer prior to disconnection.

(c) Disconnection notice shall be given upon a form approved by the commission, and shall contain the following information:

1. The name and address of the customer and the address of the service, if different.

2. A statement of the reason(s) for the proposed disconnection of service and that disconnection will occur if the account is not paid, or if arrangement is not made to pay the account under deferred payment agreement, or if other suitable arrangements are not made, or if equipment changes are not made. If disconnection of service is to be made for default on a deferred payment agreement, the notice shall include an explanation of the acts of the customer which are considered to constitute default.

3. A statement that the customer should communicate immediately upon receipt of the notice with the utility's designated office, listing a telephone number, if he disputes the notice of delinquent account, if he wishes to negotiate a deferred payment agreement as an alternative to disconnection, if any resident is seriously ill, or if there are other extenuating circumstances.

4. A statement that residential utility service will be continued for up to 21 days during serious illness if the account holder submits a statement or notice pursuant to sub. (7).

5. A statement that the customer may appeal to the public service commission staff in the event that the grounds for the proposed disconnection or the amount of any disagreement remains in dispute after the customer has pursued the available remedies with the utility.

(9) (a) Service shall not be disconnected on a day, or on a day immediately preceding a day, when the business offices of the utility are not

available to the public for the purpose of transacting all business matters unless the utility provides personnel which are readily available to the customer 24 hours per day to evaluate, negotiate or otherwise consider the customer's objection to the disconnection as provided under s. PSC 185.39, and proper service personnel are readily available to restore service 24 hours per day.

(b) If a residential service which has been disconnected has not been restored to service within 24 hours after the time of the disconnection, the utility shall inform the local law enforcement department of the billing name and the service address and that a threat to health and life might exist to persons occupying the premises.

(10) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, utility service may not be refused because of a delinquent account if the customer or applicant provides as a condition of future service a deposit or guarantee, as governed by s. 185.36, Stats., or a voucher agreement.

History: Emerg. cr. eff. 1-21-75; r. Register, January, 1975, No. 229, eff. 2-1-75; am. (1)(a) and (5)(a), Register, December, 1975, No. 240, eff. 1-1-76; emerg. cr. (10), eff. 12-17-81; cr. (2)(d), Register, April, 1983, No. 328, eff. 5-1-83; cr. (10), Register, September, 1983, No. 333, eff. 10-1-83.

**PSC 185.38 Deferred payment agreement.** The utility is required to offer deferred payment agreements only to residential accounts.

(1) Every deferred payment agreement entered into due to the customer's inability to pay the outstanding bill in full shall provide that service will not be discontinued if the customer pays a reasonable amount of the outstanding bill and agrees to pay a reasonable portion of the remaining outstanding balance in installments until the bill is paid.

(2) For purposes of determining reasonableness under these rules the parties shall consider the:

- (a) Size of the delinquent account.
- (b) Customer's ability to pay.
- (c) Customer's payment history.
- (d) Time that the debt has been outstanding.
- (e) Reasons why debt has been outstanding.
- (f) Any other relevant factors concerning the circumstances of the customer.

(3) A deferred payment agreement offered by a utility shall state immediately preceding the space provided for the customer's signature and in bold face print at least 2 sizes larger than any other used thereon, that "IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THIS AGREEMENT, DO NOT SIGN. IF YOU DO SIGN THIS AGREEMENT YOU GIVE UP YOUR RIGHT TO DISPUTE THE AMOUNT DUE UNDER THE AGREEMENT EXCEPT FOR THE UTILITY'S FAILURE OR REFUSAL TO FOLLOW THE TERMS OF THIS AGREEMENT."

(4) A deferred payment agreement shall not include a finance charge.

(5) If an applicant for utility service has not fulfilled terms of a deferred payment agreement, the utility shall have the right to disconnect pursuant to disconnection of service rules (s. PSC 185.37) and under such

circumstances, it shall not be required to offer subsequent negotiation of a deferred payment agreement prior to disconnection.

(6) Any payments made by a customer in compliance with a deferred payment agreement or otherwise shall first be considered made

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