

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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(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.

(12) **DEFERRED PAYMENT.** In lieu of a cash deposit or guarantee, an applicant for new 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 Wis. Adm. Code section PSC 134.063 for the outstanding account.

(13) **APPLICABILITY.** The rules in subsections (11) and (12) of this section 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.

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 Wis. Adm. Code section PSC 134.062 (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 Wis. Adm. Code section 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 Wis. Adm. Code section 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 Wis. Adm. Code section 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.

(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 the passage of additional time results from other provisions herein or from good faith negotiations or arrangements made with the customer.

(b) Delinquency in payment for service by a previous occupant of the premises to be served other than a member of the same household residing at the same premises.

(c) Failure to pay for merchandise or charges for non-utility service billed by the utility.

(d) Failure to pay for a different type or class of utility service.

(e) Failure to pay the account of another customer as guarantor thereof.

(f) Failure to pay charges arising from any underbilling occurring more than one year prior to the current billing and due to any misapplication of rates.

(g) Failure to pay charges arising from any underbilling occurring more than one year prior to the current billing and due to any faulty metering.

(h) Failure to pay an estimated bill other than a bill rendered pursuant to an approved bimonthly meter reading plan unless the customer upon request refuses to permit the reading of the meter during normal business hours.

(6) A utility shall not disconnect any residential service without notifying the county department of health and social services at least 5 calendar days prior to the scheduled disconnection, if the customer or responsible person has made a written request for this procedure to the utility. The customer shall be appraised of this right upon application for service.

(7) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a utility may not disconnect service to a residential customer if disconnection will aggravate an existent medical emergency of the customer, a member of his family or other permanent resident of the premises where service is rendered and if the customer conforms to the procedure described in paragraph (a), below.

(a) A utility shall postpone the disconnection of service for 21 days to enable the customer to arrange for payment, if the customer produces a

licensed Wisconsin physician's statement or notice from a public health or social services official which identifies the medical emergency and specifies the period of time during which disconnection will aggravate the circumstances. The postponement may be extended once by renewal of the certificate or notice. No further extension of time shall be granted except upon a showing by the customer of the existence of extraordinary circumstances and further that he has exercised due diligence in meeting 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 paragraph (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 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 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 Wis. Adm. Code section PSC 134.062 (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 Wis. Adm. Code section PSC 134.064 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.

History: Cr. Register, January, 1975, No. 229, eff. 2-1-75; am. (1) (a) and (5) (a), Register, December, 1975, No. 240, eff. 1-1-76; am. (2) (intro.), Register, March, 1979, No. 279, eff. 4-1-79; cr. (2) (f), Register, January, 1980, No. 289, eff. 2-1-80; cr. (2) (e), Register, February, 1980, No. 290, eff. 3-1-80.

PSC 134.063 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 the 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 type sizes larger than any other used thereon, that "IF YOU ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THIS AGREEMENT, DO NOT SIGN. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE A COUNTER OFFER AND, IF IT IS REJECTED, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO APPEAL THIS PROPOSED AGREEMENT TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN, DURING WHICH TIME THE UTILITY MAY NOT DISCONNECT YOUR SERVICE. THIS DOES NOT RELIEVE YOU FROM THE OBLIGATION TO PAY BILLS THAT ARE INCURRED AFTER COMMENCEMENT OF DISPUTE PROCEDURES. 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.