

Chapter PSC 134

STANDARDS FOR GAS SERVICE

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**PSC 134.01 General.** (1) Chapter PSC 134 of the public service commission's departmental rules is part of the Wis. Adm. Code and constitutes a general order of the public service commission, the issuance of which is authorized by sections 227.014, 196.02, 196.06, 196.10, 196.12, 196.15, 196.16, 196.17, and 196.19, Wis. Stats.

(2) The rules making up chapter PSC 134 are designed to effectuate and implement sections 196.02, 196.03, 196.06, 196.10, 196.12, 196.15, 196.16, 196.17, 196.19, 196.21, 196.22, 196.60, 196.62 and parts of other sections of the Wisconsin statutes.

(3) The requirements of chapter PSC 134 shall be observed by all public utilities, both privately and publicly owned, engaged in the manufacture, mixing, purchasing, storage, transmission and/or distribution of gaseous fuel.

(4) The manner of enforcing the rules in chapter PSC 134 is prescribed in section 196.66, Wis. Stats., and such other means as provided in statutory sections administered by the public service commission.

(5) In case of emergency, where public interest requires immediate action without waiting for compliance with the specific terms of these rules, the rules shall not prevent immediate corrective action by the utility, which action, however, shall be subject to review by the public service commission.

(6) Periodic reports to the public service commission are required by sections PSC 134.14(6); PSC 134.17; PSC 134.18(3); PSC 134.19

(3); PSC 134.25 (4). Individual reports are required by PSC 134.18 (4) and (5).

**History:** 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.014 History:** 1-2-56; r. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.015 History:** 1-2-56; r. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.02 Definitions.** The following terms as used in this chapter mean:

(1) **APPLIANCE.** A gas appliance is any device which utilizes gas fuel to produce light, heat, or power.

(2) **COMPLAINT.** Complaint as used in this chapter (PSC 134) is a statement or question by anyone, whether a utility customer or not, involving a wrong, grievance, injury, dissatisfaction, illegal action or procedure, dangerous condition or action, or utility obligation.

(3) **DEMAND.** Gas demand means the amount of gas required per unit of time, usually expressed in cubic feet, Btu, or therms per unit of time.

(4) **DRY GAS.** Dry gas as applied to gas usage means a gas having a moisture and hydrocarbon dew point below any normal temperature to which the gas piping is exposed. As applied to determination of heating value or specific gravity it means the complete absence of moisture or water vapor.

(5) **GAS.** Gas as used in this chapter is any gas or mixture of gases suitable for domestic or industrial fuel and transmitted or distributed to the user through a piping system. The common types are natural gas, manufactured gas, and liquefied petroleum gas distributed as a vapor with or without admixture of air.

(6) **HEATING AND CALORIFIC VALUES.** (a) **British thermal unit (Btu).** A British thermal unit is the quantity of heat that must be added to one avoirdupois pound of pure water to raise its temperature from 58.5°F to 59.5°F under standard pressure.

(b) **Dry calorific value.** The dry calorific value of a gas (total or net) is the value of the total or the net calorific value of the gas divided by the volume of dry gas in a standard cubic foot. (Note: The amount of dry gas in a standard cubic foot is .9826 cu. ft.).

(c) **Net calorific value of a gas.** The net calorific value of a gas is the number of British thermal units evolved by the complete combustion, at constant pressure, of one standard cubic foot of gas with air, the temperature of the gas, air, and products of combustion being 60°F and all water formed by the combustion reaction remaining in the vapor state.

(Note: The net calorific value of a gas is its total calorific value minus the latent heat of evaporation at standard temperature of the water formed by the combustion reaction).

(d) **Therm.** Therm means 100,000 British thermal units.

(e) **Total calorific value.** Total calorific value of a gas is the number of British thermal units evolved by the complete combustion, at constant pressure, of one standard cubic foot of gas with air, the temperature of the gas, air, and products of combustion being 60°F

and all water formed by the combustion reaction condensed to the liquid state.

(7) **METER.** A meter is an instrument installed to measure the volume of gas delivered through it.

(8) **MUNICIPALITY.** A municipality is any town, city or village.

(9) **PRESSURE.** (a) **Pressure.** Pressure unless otherwise stated is expressed in pounds per square inch above atmospheric pressure, i.e. gauge pressure. (Abbreviation—psig).

(b) **Standard pressure.** See (11)(c) below.

(c) **Standard service pressure.** Standard service pressure is the gas pressure which a utility undertakes to maintain on the meters of all customers except the meters of customers utilizing high-pressure service.

(10) **PUBLIC UTILITY.** Public utility is defined in section 196.01, Wis. Stats., and chapter PSC 134 applies to those supplying public utility gas service.

(11) **STANDARDS.** (a) **Specific gravity of a gas.** The specific gravity of a dry gas is the ratio of the molecular weight of the dry gas or gas mixture to the molecular weight of dry air. This is the dry specific gravity.

(b) **Standard cubic foot of gas.** A standard cubic foot of gas is the quantity of any gas that at standard temperature and under standard pressure will fill a space of 1 cu. ft. when in equilibrium with liquid water.

(Note: According to Dalton's Law, this is equivalent to stating that the partial pressure of the gas is:  $30 - 0.522 = 29.478$  inches of mercury column).

(c) **Standard pressure.** Standard pressure is the absolute pressure of pure mercury 30 inches in height at 32°F and under standard gravity (Gravity 32.174 ft. per sec.). (Equivalent to 14.735 lbs. per sq. in.).

(d) **Standard temperature.** Standard temperature is 60°F based on the international temperature scale.

(12) **UNMEASURED GAS.** Unmeasured gas is gas which has not been measured by a meter.

**History:** 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.03 Service.** Every gas utility shall furnish reasonably adequate service and facilities at the rates filed with the commission and subject to these rules and the rules of the utility filed with this Commission which are applicable thereto and not otherwise. The utility shall be operated in such manner as to obviate so far as reasonably practicable, undesirable effects upon the operation of standard services, standard utilization equipment, equipment of the utility, and upon the service and facilities of other utilities and agencies.

**History:** 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.04 Schedules to be filed with commission.** The schedules of rates and rules shall be filed with the commission by the utility and shall be classified, designated, arranged, and submitted so as to con-

form to the requirements of current tariff or rate schedule circulars and special instructions which have been and may from time to time be issued by the commission. Provisions of the schedules shall be definite and so stated as to minimize ambiguity or the possibility of misinterpretation, and shall include, together with such other information as may be deemed pertinent, the following:

(1) All rates for service with indication for each rate of the type of gas and the class of customers to which each rate applies. There shall also be shown any limitations on loads and type of equipment which may be connected, the prices per unit of service, and the number of units per billing period to which the prices apply, the period of billing, the minimum bill, method of measuring demands and consumptions, including method of calculating or estimating loads or minimums, and any special terms and conditions applicable. The discount for prompt payment or penalty for late payment, if any, and the period during which the net amount may be paid shall be specified.

(2) By municipalities, but without reference required to any particular part thereof, the type of gas supplied and the type of service (firm and/or interruptible).

(3) Forms of standard contracts required of customers for the various types of service available.

(4) If service to other utilities or municipalities for resale is furnished at a standard filed rate, either a copy of each contract or the standard contract form together with a summary of the provisions of each signed contract. The summary shall show the principal provisions of the contract and shall include the name and address of the customer, the points where gas is delivered, rate, term, minimums, load conditions, heating value of gas, pressures, and any special provisions such as rentals.

(5) Copies of special contracts for the purchase, sale, or interchange of gas.

(6) List of villages, cities, and unincorporated communities where urban rates are applicable, and towns in which service is furnished.

(7) Definitions of classes of customers.

(8) Extension rules for extending service to new customers indicating what portion of the extension or cost thereof will be furnished by the utility; and if the rule is based on cost, the items of cost included.

(9) Type of construction required of the customer if different from requirements in chapter PSC 135.

(10) Designation of such portion of the service facilities as the utility furnishes, owns, and maintains.

(11) Rules with which prospective customers must comply as a condition of receiving service, and the terms of contracts required.

(12) Rules governing the establishment of credit by customers for payment of service bills.

(13) Rules governing disconnecting and reconnecting service.

(14) Notice required from customer for having service discontinued.

(15) Rules covering temporary, emergency, auxiliary, and standby service.

(16) Rules covering the type of equipment which may or may not be connected.

(17) The list of service areas and the rates shall be filed in such form as to facilitate ready determination of the rates available in each municipality and in such unincorporated communities as have service at urban rates. If the utility has various rural rates, the areas where the same are available shall be indicated.

**History:** 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.05 Information available to customers.** There shall be kept on file in every station and office of the utility where payments are received copies of the rate schedules applicable in the area. Copies of these rules and such rules of the utility as are applicable shall be kept on file in every general and local office of the utility. Reasonable notice shall be given customers as to where the foregoing information is available to them.

**History:** 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.06 Deposit rule.** (1) If the credit of an applicant for gas service has not been established satisfactorily to the utility, he may be required to deposit a sum not exceeding the estimated gross bills for gas service for any 2 consecutive months selected by the utility. The amount to be deposited may be a minimum of \$5 for each class of gas service furnished. Deposits shall bear simple interest at the rate of 5% per annum payable from the date of the deposit to the date of refund or discontinuance of service, whichever is earlier.

(2) In the case of domestic gas service the deposits shall be refunded upon request of the customer after 12 consecutive months of prompt payment, and, without such request, shall be refunded voluntarily by the utility after 36 consecutive months of prompt payment. In no case, however, should a deposit be refunded if the customer's credit standing is not satisfactory to the utility.

(3) In the case of commercial or industrial gas service, the deposit may be refunded upon request of the customer after 36 consecutive months of prompt payment if the customer's credit standing is satisfactory to the utility.

(4) If the rules of the utility permit a customer to pay the net rate after discount date 1 month in every 12 months, such payment shall be regarded as "prompt payment" in the application of (2) and (3) immediately above.

(5) A new or additional deposit may be required upon reasonable written notice of the need for such a requirement in any case where a deposit has been refunded or is found to be inadequate to cover 2 months' bills as above provided for, or where a customer's credit standing is not satisfactory to the utility. The gas service of any customer who fails to comply with these requirements may be disconnected upon 5 days' written notice.

**History:** 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.07 Guarantee rule.** (1) The utility may accept in lieu of a 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 indeterminate, but it shall automatically terminate when the customer gives notice to the utility of discontinuance of service at the

location covered by the guarantee agreement or 6 months after discontinuance of service, or at the guarantor's request upon 30 days' written notice to the utility.

(2) Upon termination of a guarantee contract or whenever the utility deems same insufficient as to amount or surety a cash deposit or a new or additional guarantee may be required upon reasonable written notice to the customer. The gas service of any customer who fails to comply with these requirements may be disconnected upon 5 days' written notice.

(3) The guarantor shall be sent copies of all disconnect notices sent to the customer whose account he has guaranteed unless the guarantor waives such notice.

**History:** 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.08 Scope of deposit and guarantee rules.** (1) Where an applicant or customer is unable to furnish either the required cash deposit or a satisfactory guarantor, or where the customer's business is of a hazardous or temporary nature, the utility may at its option bill such applicant or customer on other than a monthly basis with a corresponding adjustment in the deposit or guarantee requirement and disconnect procedures.

(2) Sections PSC 134.06, PSC 134.07, and PSC 134.08 are not applicable to deposits or guarantees made in connection with the financing of extensions or other equipment.

**History:** 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.09 Refusal or discontinuance of service.** (1) Service may be disconnected if a customer's current bill for service as defined in the utility's filed rules is not paid within a reasonable period set forth in said rules.

(2) The utility may at its option continue service beyond the period provided under its filed disconnect rule under the following conditions: If the utility has a deposit or guarantee on the account, such deposit or guarantee shall be considered as applying against the bills which first become delinquent. If the utility has no deposit or guarantee on the account, or if the delinquent bills exceed the deposit or guarantee, service may not be discontinued or refused for nonpayment of bills which are delinquent for a period longer than that permitted under the filed disconnect rule.

(3) Section PSC 134.09(2) shall apply in all cases unless the customer is willing to enter into a special agreement with the company, a written memorandum of which shall be made by the utility, providing for a specified extension of time and/or an extension of a specified amount of credit, and providing further for the disconnection of such customer upon failure to comply with the terms of such extension agreement.

**Note:** Some utilities have rules or practices that are more liberal to customers in some particulars. It is not the intention to require the abandonment of these practices, except that it is believed a standardization of interest on customers' prompt payment deposits will avoid confusion and misunderstanding. With this exception, a utility may establish uniform, nondiscriminatory rules and practices more favorable to its customers than those herein established. The purpose is rather to set forth a reasonable basis for standardizing these rules.

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

(5) The following shall not constitute sufficient cause for refusal of service to a present or prospective customer: (a) Delinquency in payment for service by a previous occupant of the premises to be served.

(b) Failure to pay for merchandise and jobbing charges billed by the utility.

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

(d) Failure to pay the bill of another customer as guarantor thereof.

(e) Failure to pay a charge because of an inaccurate meter. (See section PSC 134.14(5)).

(f) Failure to pay an estimated bill unless the customer upon request refuses to permit the reading of the meter during reasonable hours.

(g) Failure to pay a bill to correct previous underbilling due to misapplication of rates.

(h) Operation of substandard equipment unless the customer has first been notified and been afforded reasonable opportunity to correct the installation, provided, however, that where a dangerous condition exists on customer's premises, service may be disconnected.

(i) Failure to pay a bill for which service was disconnected, if customer arranges for payment of future bills.

(j) Failure to pay a utility service bill at another location.

**History:** 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.10 Service on customer's premises.** (1) All changes in the heating value standard, all changes in pressure and specific gravity greater than the allowable variation, and changes in the composition of the gas which would materially affect the operation of the customer's appliances must be accompanied by a general inspection and adjustment of all appliances that would be affected by the changes. The utility shall make such adjustments and such changes to all customers' appliances that are connected to an interior piping system at the time of the change as may be necessary in order that the appliance may operate as efficiently and give as good service as was possible before the change. This should be done promptly and without cost or unnecessary inconvenience to the customer.

(2) If in connection with a service change specified in (1) above, a piece of properly operating utilization equipment cannot be adjusted so that it will operate satisfactorily and if it must be replaced in its entirety the utility shall share equitably in the cost of changing the equipment. The change in customer's equipment should be made with the greatest possible economy to the customer, and final settlement made at the time of the change. A satisfactory settlement would be payment by the utility to the customer of the remaining value of the customer's equipment and the cost of removing the old and installing in the same position substantially equal equipment which replaces it.

(3) Each utility shall adopt and file with this commission a policy for periodic inspection of customer's appliances. This period shall not

be greater than 5 years. The filed rule need not include the inspection and adjustment of special industrial equipment, which should be checked by persons more familiar with the equipment. The filed rule shall provide that customers having such equipment are to be notified periodically.

**History:** 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.11 Meters and control equipment.** (1) Where possible to do so, all gas quantities required to be reported to the commission shall be metered.

(2) All gas sold to customers shall be measured by commercially acceptable measuring devices owned and maintained by the utility. The maintenance of the accuracy of the meters shall be the responsibility of the utility.

(3) Every reasonable effort shall be made to measure at one meter location all gas quantities necessary for billing the customer.

(4) All gas customers of the same type, pressure, and/or volume classification shall have their gas metered with instruments having like characteristics and at the same pressure base, except that the commission may approve the use of instruments of different types if their use does not result in unreasonable discrimination.

(5) Any regulators or equipment used to provide service in accordance with commission or filed utility rules and rates shall be commercially acceptable devices owned and maintained by the utility.

**History:** 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.12 Meter readings and billing periods.** Reading of all meters used for determining charges to customers shall be scheduled monthly, bimonthly, quarterly, or semi-annually. An effort shall be made to read meters on corresponding days of each meter-reading period. The meter-reading date may be advanced or postponed not more than 5 days without adjustment of the billing for the period. Bills for service shall be rendered within 40 days from the reading of the meter except as may be otherwise specifically authorized by the commission. The utility may permit the customer to supply the meter readings on a form supplied by the utility, provided a utility representative reads the meter at least once each 6 months and when there is a change of customer.

**History:** 1-2-56; r. and recr. Register, February, 1959, No. 38, eff. 3-1-59.

**PSC 134.13 Billing.** (1) Each bill, including the customer's receipt, shall show the present and last preceding meter readings, the date of the present reading, the number of units consumed, the class of service, the net and gross amount of the bill, the date after which the gross amount must be paid, the rate schedule under which the bill is computed, and heating value of the gas. Bills rendered at rates requiring the measurement of a number of different factors shall show all data necessary for the customer to check the computation of the bill. Minimum and estimated bills shall be distinctly marked as such. In lieu of including the rate schedule on the bill the utility may, whenever a rate change becomes effective and at least twice a year, attach to the bill a schedule of the rates at which the bill is computed.