

DUKE ENERGY OHIO  
SERVICE REGULATIONS

SUPPLEMENT B

RULES, REGULATIONS AND PRACTICES  
GOVERNING THE DISCONNECTION OF  
GAS, NATURAL GAS, OR ELECTRIC  
SERVICE TO RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS

Rule 4901:1-18 of the Ohio Administrative Code as  
Adopted by The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio  
in Case No. 03-888-AU-ORD

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**4901:1-18-01 Definitions.**

- (A) "Collection charge" means a tarified charge assessed to a residential customer by a company for dispatching an employee or agent to a residence who is authorized to accept payment for utility service.
- (B) "Commission" means the public utilities commission of Ohio.
- (C) "Company" means a natural gas company as defined in division (G) of section 4929.01 of the Revised Code or an electric distribution utility as defined in division (A)(6) of section 4928.01 of the Revised Code.
- (D) "Consumer" means any person who is the ultimate user of electric or gas service.
- (E) "Customer" means any person who enters into a contractual agreement with the company to receive residential electric or gas service.
- (F) "Default" means the failure to make the required payment on an extended payment plan by the due date.
- (G) "Extended payment plan" means an agreement between the customer and the company that requires the customer to make payments over a set period of time to the company on unpaid amounts owed to the company.
- (H) "Household income" has the meaning attributed to it by the Ohio department of development, office of community services, in the administration of the home energy assistance program.
- (I) "Primary source of heat" means the energy that is the heat source for the central heating system of the residence or, if the residence is not centrally heated, the energy that makes up the bulk of the energy used for space heating.
- (J) "Secondary source of heat" means the energy that is the heat source for space heating other than that provided by the central heating system of the residence or, if the residence is not centrally heated, the energy that does not make up the bulk of the energy used for space heating or, if the residence is centrally heated using some other form of energy, the energy required to operate equipment needed for the proper functioning of the central heating system.

**4901:1-18-02 General provisions.**

Natural gas or electric companies under the jurisdiction of the commission may disconnect service to residential customers only for the following reasons:

- (A) For any violation of or refusal to comply with a contract and/or the general service rules and regulations on file with the commission that apply to the customer's service.
- (B) When a consumer uses electricity or gas in a manner detrimental to the service to other consumers.
- (C) When providing service is in conflict or incompatible with any order of the commission, court of law, laws of the state of Ohio or any political subdivision thereof, or of the federal government or any of its agencies.
- (D) When the customer has moved from the customer location.

- (E) When supplying electricity or gas creates a safety hazard to consumers or their premises, the public, or to the company's personnel or facilities or where, because of conditions beyond the consumer's premises, disconnection of the supply of electricity or gas is reasonably necessary. The company shall not restore service until the hazardous condition(s) has been corrected.
- (F) When a customer, consumer, or his/her agent:
  - (1) Prevents utility company personnel from reading the meter for a year or more, unless the company suspects tampering or other fraudulent activities.
  - (2) After notice and a reasonable period of time under the circumstances, continues to prevent company personnel from calibrating, maintaining, or replacing the company's meter, metering equipment, or other company property used to supply service.
  - (3) Resorts to any fraudulent practice to obtain electric or gas service, is the beneficiary of the fraudulent practice, or damages the company's meter, metering equipment or other property used to supply the service. Under the circumstances stated in this paragraph the company need not restore service until the consumer or customer has completed each of the following:
    - (a) Given assurance that the fraudulent or damaging practice has been discontinued.
    - (b) Paid to the company an amount estimated by the company to be reasonable compensation for unauthorized usage obtained and not paid for at the time of disconnection.
    - (c) Paid for any damage to property of the company including any cost to repair the damage.
    - (d) All other fees and charges authorized by tariff resulting from the fraudulent practice or tampering.
- (G) For repairs, provided that notice to consumers is given prior to scheduled maintenance interruptions in excess of six hours.
- (H) Upon the request of the customer.
- (I) For nonpayment, including nonpayment of security deposits applied to delinquent bills as a condition for continued service, only after the provisions and procedures set forth in the rules in this chapter have been complied with by the natural gas or electric company.

**4901:1-18-03 Delinquent bills.**

- (A) Individually metered residential service accounts will be considered delinquent and subject to the company's disconnection procedures for nonpayment if the account meets one of the following criteria:
  - (1) The customer has not made full payment or arrangements for payment by the due date, for any given bill containing a previous balance for regulated services provided by the distribution utility.
  - (2) The customer is in default on an extended payment plan.

- (3) The customer fails to make the initial payment on an extended payment plan.
- (B) The minimum payment necessary in order to avoid the disconnection procedures shall not be greater than the delinquent amount, i.e., that portion of the bill that represents a previous balance for regulated services provided by the distribution utility.

**4901:1-18-04 Extended payment plans and responsibilities.**

- (A) Upon contact by a customer whose account is delinquent or who desires to avoid a delinquency, the company shall inform the customer that it will make extensions or other extended payment plans appropriate for both the customer and the company. The company may require the customer to demonstrate an inability to pay. If the customer proposes payment terms, the company may exercise discretion in the acceptance of the payment terms based upon the account balance, the length of time that the balance has been outstanding, the customer's recent payment history, the reasons why payment has not been made, and any other relevant factors concerning the circumstances of the customer, including health, age, and family circumstances. If the customer fails to propose payment terms acceptable to the company, the company shall then advise the customer of the availability of one of the extended payment plans as set forth in paragraphs (A)(1) and (A)(2) of this rule and of the availability of the extended payment plan set forth in paragraph (B) of this rule for a customer whose income qualifies him/her for such a plan. A customer who is in default on an extended payment plan other than one set forth in paragraphs (A)(1), (A)(2), or (B) of this rule is eligible for an extended payment plan as set forth in paragraphs (A)(1), (A)(2), and (B) of this rule provided he/she meets the qualifications for those plans. A customer who is in default on one of the extended payment plans set forth in paragraph (A)(1) or (A)(2) of this rule is eligible for the extended payment plan set forth in paragraph (B) of this rule provided he/she meets the qualifications for that plan.

If a customer informs the company of a medical problem, the company shall inform the customer of the medical certification program as provided in paragraph (C) of rule 4901:1-18-05 of the Administrative Code.

Each company shall offer the customer at least one of the following extended payment plans:

- (1) A plan that requires six equal monthly payments on the arrearages in addition to full payment of current bills.
- (2) A plan that requires payment of one-third of the balance due each month (arrearages plus current bill). This plan shall be offered during the winter heating season as required by paragraph (B)(3) of rule 4901:1-18-05 of the Administrative Code.
- (B) No company shall disconnect the service of any residential customer for nonpayment or refuse to reconnect, because of an arrearage, the service of a residential customer who has requested to transfer his/her service from one address to another as long as that customer meets each of the following qualifications:
  - (1) The customer has a household income for the past three months, which if annualized, would equal one hundred fifty per cent of the federal poverty level or less or, if the household income for the past three months annualized is more than one hundred fifty per cent of the federal poverty level, the customer has a household income for the past twelve months equal to one hundred fifty per cent of the federal poverty level or less.

- (2) For usage during any billing period all or part of which is within the winter period as defined by paragraph (B) of rule 4901:1-18-05 of the Administrative Code, the customer pays at least one of the following amounts:
    - (a) Ten per cent of his/her monthly household income to the jurisdictional company that provides the customer with his/her primary source of heat and pays at least five per cent of his/her monthly household income to the jurisdictional company that provides the customer a secondary source of heat.
    - (b) Fifteen per cent of his/her monthly household income to the jurisdictional company that provides both primary and secondary source of heat.
    - (c) Fifteen per cent of his/her monthly household income to the jurisdictional electric company that provides the totality of energy used for heating purposes to his/her residence.
    - (d) Ten per cent of his/her monthly household income to the jurisdictional company that provides the primary source of heat when a non-jurisdictional utility company or other person provides the secondary source of heat.
    - (e) Five per cent of his/her monthly household income to the jurisdictional company that provides the secondary source of heat when a non-jurisdictional utility company or other person provides the primary source of heat.
  - (3) For usage during any billing period, no part of which is within the winter period as defined by paragraph (B) of rule 4901:1-18-05 of the Administrative Code, the customer pays that percentage of his/her income required by paragraph (B)(2) of this rule or the current bill for actual non winter usage, whichever is greater.
  - (4) The customer applies for all public energy assistance for which he/she is eligible.
  - (5) The customer applies for all weatherization programs for which he/she is eligible.
  - (6) The customer provides proof to the jurisdictional company or the Ohio department of development, whichever is appropriate, no less often than once in every twelve months that he/she meets the household income requirements of paragraph (B)(1) of this rule. For customers determined to have zero income under paragraph (B)(1) of this rule, the jurisdictional company may require the customer to verify the household income no more than once every ninety days.
  - (7) The customer signs a waiver permitting the affected jurisdictional company to receive information from any public agency or private agency providing income or energy assistance and from any employer whether public or private.
- (C) For purposes of paragraphs (B)(1) and (B)(2) of this rule, any money provided to the jurisdictional company from the regular home energy assistance program (HEAP), or similar program, on behalf of the customer as energy assistance shall not be considered as household income or counted as part of the monies paid by the customer to meet the percentage of income requirement. Any money provided to the jurisdictional company on an irregular or on an emergency basis by a public or private agency for the purpose of paying utility bills shall not be considered as household income. These monies shall first be applied to the customer's current monthly payment obligation as determined in accordance with paragraph (B)(2) of this rule, with any money in excess of the amount necessary to satisfy the current monthly payment obligation being applied to either the

amount the customer is in default on an extended payment plan or, if no such default exists, then to the customer's arrearages.

- (D) The company shall provide an optional uniform payment plan (budget plan) on an annual basis for any customer who is not in default on a previously agreed upon extended payment plan. Arrearages need not be included in the optional uniform payment plan (budget plan).
- (E) A customer's failure to make any payment provided for under paragraph (A) or (B) of this rule shall entitle the company to disconnect service in accordance with the procedures set forth in rule 4901:1-18-05 of the Administrative Code.
- (F) The company shall furnish upon the request of the customer entering into an extended payment plan a written, typed, printed, or computer-generated copy of the plan and, if the extended payment plan was arranged by a company employee, the name of that employee.

**4901:1-18-05 Disconnection procedures for natural gas and electric companies.**

- (A) If a residential customer is delinquent in paying for regulated services provided by the distribution utility, the company may, after proper and reasonable notice of pending disconnection of service (not less than fourteen days), disconnect the customer's service during normal company business hours in compliance with all of the following conditions:
  - (1) No disconnections for nonpayment shall be made after twelve-thirty p.m. on the day preceding a day on which all services necessary for the customer to arrange and the company to perform reconnection are not regularly performed.
  - (2) On the day of disconnection of service, the company shall provide the customer with personal notice. If the customer is not at home, the company shall provide personal notice to an adult consumer. If neither the customer nor an adult consumer is at home, the company shall attach written notice to the premises in a conspicuous location prior to disconnecting service.
  - (3) Third-party or guarantor notification.
    - (a) Each company shall permit a residential customer to designate a third party to receive notice of the pending disconnection of the customer's service or of any other credit notices sent to the customer. If the customer has a guarantor, the guarantor shall receive notice of the pending disconnection of the guaranteed customer's service or of any other credit notices sent to the guaranteed customer, except where the guarantor has affirmatively waived the right to receive notices pursuant to rule 4901:1-17-03 of the Administrative Code. The company shall notify the third party or the guarantor at least fourteen days prior to disconnecting the customer's service.
    - (b) The company shall inform the third party that his/her receipt of such notices does not constitute acceptance of any liability by the third party for payment for service provided to the customer unless the third party has also agreed, in writing, to be a guarantor for the customer.
    - (c) In compliance with division (E) of section 4933.12 and division (D) of section 4933.121 of the Revised Code, if the company plans to disconnect the residential utility service of a customer for the nonpayment of his/her bill, and that customer resides in a county in which the department of job and family

services has provided the company with a written request for prior notification of residential service disconnection, then the company shall provide the appropriate county department of job and family services with a listing of those customers whose service will be disconnected for nonpayment at least twenty-four hours before the action is taken.

- (d) Upon the request of a property owner or the agent of a property owner, each company shall provide the property owner or the agent of a property owner with at least three-days advance notice when service to his/her property is to be disconnected either at the request of a residential customer who is a tenant or for nonpayment.
- (4) Employees or agents who disconnect service at the premises may or may not, at the discretion of the company, be authorized to make extended payment arrangements. Company employees or agents who disconnect service shall be authorized to complete one of the following:
- (a) Accept payment in lieu of disconnection.
  - (b) Dispatch an employee to the premises to accept payment.
  - (c) Make available to the customer another means to avoid disconnection.
- (5) The following information shall be either clearly displayed on the disconnection notice or included in documents accompanying the disconnection notice:
- (a) The delinquent billing account number, the total amount required to prevent disconnection of the regulated services provided by the distribution utility and any security deposit owed at the time of the notice.
  - (b) The earliest date when disconnection may occur.
  - (c) The local or toll-free number and address of the company's office for customers to contact about their account.
  - (d) A statement that the commission staff is available to render assistance with unresolved complaints, the current address, local or toll-free number and the TDD/TTY number of the commission's public interest center, and the commission's website.
  - (e) A statement that the customer's failure to pay the amount required at the company's office or to one of its authorized agents by the date specified in the notice may result in a security deposit and a charge for reconnection being required. The statement shall also include the amount of the security deposit and the reconnection charge.
  - (f) If applicable, a statement that the failure to pay charges for non-tariffed and/or non-regulated products or services may result in the loss of those products and/or services.
  - (g) An explanation of the payment plans and options available to a customer whose account is delinquent, as provided in this rule and rule 4901:1-18-04 of the Administrative Code, and, when applicable, rule 4901:1-18-10 of the Administrative Code.

- (h) If disconnection of service is to occur, as a result of nonpayment, a statement that a medical certification program and forms are available from the company.
  - (i) A statement that a listing of the company's authorized payment agents is available by calling the company's toll-free customer service number.
- (B) The company shall not disconnect service to residential customers for nonpayment during the period of November first through April fifteenth unless, in addition to the other requirements of this rule, the company completes each of the following:
- (1) Makes contact with the customer or other adult consumer at the premises ten days prior to disconnection of service by personal contact, telephone, or hand-delivered written notice.
  - (2) Informs the customer or adult consumer that sources of federal, state, and local government aid for payment of utility bills and for home weatherization are available at the time the company delivers the notice required in paragraph (B)(1) of this rule, and provides sufficient information to allow the customer to further pursue available assistance.
  - (3) Informs the customer of the right to enter into a payment plan as set forth in paragraph (A)(2) of rule 4901:1-18-04 of the Administrative Code, unless the customer qualifies for the payment plan set forth in paragraph (B) of rule 4901:1-18-04 of the Administrative Code, in which event the company shall inform the customer of the availability of both plans. The company may require reasonable verification of the customer's household income, including but not necessarily limited to verification by the local agency providing governmental aid in paying utility bills. If the customer does not respond to the notice described in paragraph (B)(1) of this rule, or refuses to accept a payment plan or fails to make the initial payment on a payment plan referenced in this paragraph, the company may disconnect service after the ten-day notice expires.
- (C) Medical Certification
- (1) The company shall not disconnect service for nonpayment if the disconnection of service would be especially dangerous to health. The health condition must be certified in accordance with this rule.
  - (2) When the disconnection of service would make operation of necessary medical or life-supporting equipment impossible or impractical, the company shall not disconnect service for nonpayment, if the customer establishes an inability to pay the amount due in full and enters into and makes payments in accordance with an extended payment plan. The necessary medical or life-supporting equipment must be certified in accordance with this rule.
  - (3) The electric distribution company shall give notice of availability of medical certification to its residential customers by means of bill inserts or special notices at the beginning of the winter heating period and at the beginning of the summer cooling period. The natural gas company shall give notice of the availability of medical certification to its residential customers by means of bill inserts or special notices at the beginning of the winter heating period.
  - (4) The company shall provide application forms for health care professionals or local board of health physicians for certification upon request of any residential consumer.

- (5) Any consumer who is a permanent resident of the premises where the service is rendered may qualify for certification.
- (6) The condition shall be certified to the company by a licensed physician, physician assistant, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse practitioner, certified nurse-midwife, or local board of health physician.
  - (a) The certification required by paragraphs (C)(1) and (C)(2) of this rule shall be in writing and shall include the name of the person to be certified, a statement that the person is a permanent resident of the premises in question, the name, business address, and telephone number of the certifying party, the nature of the condition, and a signed statement by the certifying party that disconnection of service will be especially dangerous to health.
  - (b) Initial certification by the certifying party may be by telephone if written certification is forwarded to the company within seven days.
  - (c) In the event service has been disconnected within twenty-one days prior to certification of special danger to health for a qualifying resident, service shall be restored to that residence if proper certification is made in accordance with the foregoing provisions and the customer agrees to an extended payment plan.
  - (d) Certification shall prohibit disconnection of service for thirty days. Certification may be renewed two additional times (thirty days each) by a licensed physician, physician assistant, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse practitioner, certified nurse-midwife, or local board of health physician by providing an additional certificate to the company. The total certification period is not to exceed ninety days per household in any twelve-month period.
  - (e) Upon renewal of certification, company personnel shall personally contact the customer and advise the customer of the governmental assistance programs that may be available. In the event that the best efforts of the company fail to result in personal contact, the company shall provide assistance information by mail.
  - (f) If a medical certificate is used to avoid disconnection, the customer shall enter into an extended payment plan prior to the end of the medical certification period or be subject to disconnection. The initial payment on the plan shall not be due until the end of the certification period.
- (D) Upon request of the customer, the company shall provide an opportunity for review of the initial decision to disconnect the service. The company shall review the circumstances surrounding the disconnection, escalate the review to an appropriate supervisor if requested, and inform the customer of the decision upon review as soon as possible. At the customer's request, the company shall respond in writing.
- (E) The company when contacted by the commission's public interest center shall respond to an inquiry concerning a pending disconnection or actual disconnection within two business days. At the request of commission staff, the company shall respond in writing. Commission staff will notify the customer of the company's response.

- (F) The company shall include in its tariff its current standard practices and procedures for disconnection, including the applicable collection and reconnect charges. The company shall submit a sample disconnection notice for approval.

**4901:1-18-06 Reconnection of service.**

The company shall reconnect service that has been disconnected for nonpayment pursuant to the following provisions:

- (A) Upon payment or proof of payment, including any reconnection charge, of the amount owed for the service that was previously disconnected or of an amount sufficient to cure the default on any extended payment plan described in Rule 4901:1-18-04 of the Administrative Code, including any reconnection charge, the company shall reconnect service by the close of the following regular company working day. The amount sufficient to cure the default includes all amounts that would have been due and owing under the terms of the applicable extended payment plan, absent default, on the date on which service is reconnected.
- (B) If service is disconnected and the customer wishes to guarantee the reconnection of service the same day on which payment is rendered:
- (1) The customer must provide proof of payment, and notify the company no later than twelve-thirty p.m. that reconnection of service is requested the same day.
  - (2) The company may require the customer to pay or agree to pay the company's approved tariff charges for reconnection of service if reconnection of service occurs after normal company business hours. The company may collect this fee prior to reconnection or with the customer's next monthly billing.
- (C) The company shall not assess a reconnection charge unless the company has actually disconnected the service. The company may, however, assess a collection charge if a collection charge is part of the company's approved tariff.
- (D) If the company requires a guarantor in order to reestablish service, the guarantor shall sign an acknowledgment that he/she is willing to accept the responsibility to secure payment of the customer's bill in an amount sufficient for a sixty-day supply of service.

**4901:1-18-07 Landlord-tenant provisions.**

A company may disconnect utility service of individuals whose utility services are included in rental payments and of consumers residing in a multi-unit dwelling (i.e., tenants who receive master-metered services) for which the customer is the landlord, only in accordance with the following:

- (A) The company shall give a notice of disconnection of service to the landlord/agent at least fourteen days before the disconnection would occur. If, at the end of the fourteen-day notice period, the customer has not paid or made payment arrangements for the bill to which the fourteen-day notice relates, the company shall then make a good faith effort by mail, or otherwise, to provide a separate ten-day notice of pending disconnection to the landlord/agent, and to each unit of a multi-unit dwelling (i.e., each tenant who receives master-metered service). This ten-day notice shall be in addition to the fourteen-day notice given to the landlord/agent. This notice requirement shall be complied with throughout the year. In a multi-unit dwelling, written notice shall also be placed in a conspicuous place.
- (B) The company shall also provide the following information in its ten-day notice:

- (1) A summary of the remedies tenants may choose to prevent disconnection or to have service reconnected.
  - (2) A statement to inform tenants that a list of procedures and forms to prevent disconnection or to have service reconnected are available from the company upon request. A model form of the tenants' ten-day notice is attached as appendix A to this rule.
- (C) The company shall inform any consumer inquiring about the notice, posted pursuant to paragraph (A) of this rule, of the amount due for the current month's bill and that the disconnection of service may be prevented if the consumer(s) makes a single payment to the company in the amount of the current month's bill.
- (D) The company shall credit to the appropriate account any payment made by tenants equal to or exceeding the landlord's current bill for those premises. The company is under no obligation to accept partial payment from individual tenants. The company may choose to accept only a single payment from a representative acting on behalf of all the tenants.
- (E) No company shall disconnect service to master-metered premises when all of the following actions take place:
- (1) A tenant delivers to the company a copy of the written notice required by division (A) of section 5321.07 of the Revised Code, signed by fifty per cent or more of the tenants of the occupied dwelling units, which notice shall designate the imminent disconnection of utility service (as shown by the disconnection notices received) as a reason for the notice.
  - (2) A tenant informs the company in writing of the date of the last day on which rent may be paid before a penalty is assessed or the date on which default on the lease or rental agreement can be claimed.
  - (3) The tenants timely invoke the remedies provided in divisions (B)(1) and (B)(2) of section 5321.07 of the Revised Code, including but not limited to:
    - (a) Depositing all rent that is due and thereafter becomes due to the landlord, with the clerk of the municipal or county court having jurisdiction, and
    - (b) Applying to the court for an order to use the rent deposited to remedy the condition or conditions specified in the tenant's notice to the landlord (including but not necessarily limited to payment to the company rendering the disconnection notice).
- (F) Each company that delivers notice pursuant to paragraph (A) of this rule shall provide to each tenant, upon request, the procedures to avoid disconnection or to have service reconnected as described in appendix B to this rule. The forms referenced in appendix B to this rule shall be made available by the company and also will be available on the commission's website at [www.puc.state.oh.us/PUCO/forms/index.cfm](http://www.puc.state.oh.us/PUCO/forms/index.cfm) or by contacting the commission's public interest center toll-free (in Ohio) at 1-800-686-7826 or TDD/TTY at 1-800-686-1570. The company shall also identify for the tenant any resources in the community where he/she can obtain assistance in pursuing his/her claim, including but not limited to:
- (1) The telephone number(s) of the local legal services program (in cities over one hundred thousand served by that company),

- (2) The toll-free number(s) for the Ohio state legal services association,
  - (3) The toll-free number(s) of the office of consumers' counsel,
  - (4) The telephone number(s) of the local bar association, and
  - (5) The telephone number(s) of the local tenant organization(s).
- (G) If a company disconnects service to consumers whose utility services are included in rental payments or who are residing in master-metered premises, the company, upon inquiry, shall inform the consumer that service will be reconnected upon payment of the amount due for the current month's bill plus any reconnection charge if the payment is made within fourteen days of disconnection. The company shall continue service at the premises as long as the tenant's representative continues to pay for each month's service (based upon actual or estimated consumption) by the due date of the bill for that service. The company shall also reconnect service for those consumers who, within fourteen days of the disconnection of service, invoke the provisions of section 5321.07 of the Revised Code, as specified in paragraph (E) of this rule. If the consumers choose to have their service reconnected by paying the current month's bill and payment is not made by the due date each month, the company shall post the notice in a conspicuous location on the premises and make a good faith effort by mail or otherwise to notify each household unit of a multi-unit dwelling or tenant receiving service in the master-metered premises of the impending service disconnection. The company is not required to reconnect service pursuant to this paragraph where the landlord resides on the premises.
- (H) The company shall only provide service to a master-metered premise if the customer is the landlord/owner of the premises. Company acceptance of new applications for service to master-metered premises requires the landlord/owner to provide to the company an accurate list specifying the individual mailing addresses of each unit served at the master-metered premises.
- (I) The company may charge the landlord/owner of the master-metered premises a reasonable fee, as set forth in the company's tariffs, designed to pay the company's incurred cost for providing the notice to tenants required by paragraph (A) of this rule.
- (J) The company has the burden of collecting any amounts in arrears.
- (K) If a customer, who is a property owner or the agent of a property owner, requests disconnection of service when residential tenants reside at the premises, the company shall perform both of the following actions:
- (1) Provide at least a ten-day notice prior to the disconnection of service by mail to the residential tenants or by posting the notice in conspicuous places on the premises.
  - (2) Inform such customer of the customer's liability for all utility service consumed during the ten-day notice period.
- (L) Notwithstanding any notice requirement of a company under paragraph (K) of this rule and paragraph (A)(3)(d) of rule 4901:1-18-05 of the Administrative Code, a company will not be found to have violated these rules if:
- (1) The company uses reasonable efforts to determine the status of the customer/consumer as either a property owner, the agent of a property owner, or a tenant; or

- (2) The customer/consumer misrepresents the status of the customer/consumer as either a property owner, or the agent of a property owner, or tenant.

#### **4901:1-18-07 Appendices & Forms**

#### **4901:1-18-08 Waiver requests.**

The public utilities commission of Ohio may waive any rule or any part of a rule contained in this chapter of the Administrative Code for good cause upon its own motion or upon application by a company.

The application for a waiver shall include the specific rule(s) requested to be waived. If the request is to waive only a part or parts of a rule, then the application should identify the appropriate paragraphs, sections, or subsections to be waived. The waiver request shall provide sufficient explanation by rule, including advantages and possible disadvantages, to allow the commission to thoroughly evaluate the waiver request.

#### **4901:1-18-09 Residential natural gas bills.**

- (A) This rule applies to natural gas company bills that do not include any retail gas supplier charges. Requirements for natural gas consolidated billing appear in rule 4901:1-29-12 of the Administrative Code.
- (B) Bills issued by or for the natural gas company shall be accurate and rendered at regular intervals and shall contain clear and understandable form and language. Each bill shall display the following information:
  - (1) The customer's name, billing address, service address, and account number.
  - (2) The natural gas company's name and its payment address.
  - (3) The natural gas company's twenty-four hour, local or toll-free telephone number for reporting service emergencies.
  - (4) A statement that customers with bill questions or complaints should call or write the natural gas company first. The bill shall list the natural gas company's local or toll-free telephone number(s) and the address where a question or complaint may be sent.
  - (5) The following text:

"If your questions are not resolved after you have called (name of company), you may call the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) toll-free at 1-800-686-7826 or 1-614-466-3292, or for TDD/TTY toll-free at 1-800-686-1570 or 1-614-466-8180, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays, or visit the PUCO website at [www.PUCO.ohio.gov](http://www.PUCO.ohio.gov).

Residential customers may also call the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), toll-free at 1-877-742-5622 from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekdays, or visit the OCC website at [www.pickocc.org](http://www.pickocc.org)."
  - (6) A rate schedule, if applicable.
  - (7) The dates of the service period covered by the bill.
  - (8) The billing determinants, if applicable:

- (a) Beginning meter reading(s),
  - (b) Ending meter reading(s),
  - (c) Demand meter reading(s),
  - (d) Multiplier(s),
  - (e) Consumption, and/or
  - (f) Demand(s).
- (9) The gas cost recovery rate expressed in dollars and cents per MCF or CCF.
- (10) The total charge attributable to the gas cost recovery rate expressed in dollars and cents.
- (11) The identification of estimated bills.
- (12) The due date for payment.
- (13) The total charges for current billing period.
- (14) Any late payment charge or gross and net charges, if applicable.
- (15) Any unpaid amounts due from previous bills, customer credits, and total amounts due and payable.
- (16) The current balance of the account, if the residential customer is billed according to a budget plan.
- (17) The current gas and electric charges separately, if the customer is billed for gas and electric service on the same bill.
- (18) If applicable, each charge for non-tariffed, non-regulated service(s).
- (19) Any nonrecurring charge(s).
- (20) Any payment(s) or credit(s) applied to the account during the current billing period.
- (21) If applicable, the percentage of income payment program (PIPP) billing information:
- (a) Current PIPP payment,
  - (b) PIPP payments defaulted (i.e., past due),
  - (c) Total PIPP amount due, and
  - (d) Total account arrearage.
- (22) An explanation of codes and abbreviations used.

- (23) If applicable, the name of the selected competitive retail natural gas supplier or governmental aggregator and a statement that such provider is responsible for billing the gas supplier charges.
  - (24) The customer's historical consumption during each of the preceding twelve months, with a total and average consumption for such twelve-month period.
  - (25) A prominently displayed "apples-to-apples" notice, if the company has a choice program.
  - (26) A statement, either appearing directly on the bill, in a bill insert, or as a separate mailing, of any payment arrangement agreed upon by the customer and the company.
  - (27) Other information required by Ohio law or commission rule or order.
- (C) A natural gas company proposing any new bill format shall file its proposed bill format with the commission for approval. If the commission does not act upon an application for sample bill approval within forty-five days, the sample bill shall be approved.
  - (D) Each natural gas company shall maintain an appropriate listing of its customer service number(s) in the directory of each certified local telephone service provider operating in the natural gas company's service area.
  - (E) Each natural gas company shall, upon request, provide customers with an updated list of the name and street address/location of the nearest payment center and/or local authorized agent, and alternative methods available for payment of customer bills. Customers shall not be charged more than two-times the cost of a first-class postage stamp for processing their payments by cash, check or money order at authorized agent locations.
  - (F) When a customer pays a bill at the natural gas company's business office or to an authorized agent of the company, the payment, including any partial payment, shall be immediately credited to the customer's account where feasible and in any event be credited to the customer's account as of the date received at the business office or by the agent. No natural gas company shall disconnect service to a customer who pays to the company or an authorized agent of the company the total amount due (or an amount agreed upon between the natural gas company and the customer to prevent disconnection) on the account by the close of business on the disconnection date listed on the disconnection notice. Payment received by an authorized agent of the natural gas company shall constitute receipt of payment by the company.
  - (G) Each natural gas company shall establish a written policy for its personnel at its business offices and for its authorized agents to handle billing disputes, requests for payment arrangements, and reporting payments to prevent disconnection of service. If these matters cannot be handled by an agent authorized to accept payments, the agent shall provide customers with the natural gas company's local or toll-free number.
  - (H) Any natural gas company wishing to issue billing statements online shall comply with each of the following requirements:
    - (1) A customer shall not be required to use online billing.
    - (2) No enrollment or usage fees shall be assessed to a customer who chooses to receive bills and/or customer information online.

- (3) The online billing statement shall include all requirements listed in paragraph (B) of this rule.
- (4) The company shall maintain a secure and encrypted site that is to be accessed only by the customer of record after completing a secure registration process.
- (5) Any fees to accept online payments shall be clearly disclosed in payment window(s).
- (6) Any payment made online shall be treated as a payment made at the company business office and shall be posted to the account in accordance with paragraph (F) of this rule. The time needed to post the payment to the account shall be clearly stated.
- (7) If a customer chooses to use online billing, the customer shall not be restricted to making payments online in the future. All payment methods shall continue to be available to the customer.

**4901:1-18-10 Combination utility companies.**

- (A) The residential customers and consumers of a combination utility company that provides both natural gas and electric service shall have the same rights pursuant to Chapter 4901:1-18 of the Administrative Code as customers and consumers who are served by separate natural gas and electric companies. In the event of disconnection or pending disconnection of both gas and electric services, a residential customer of a combination utility company has the right to choose to retain or have reconnected both utility services or one service, either gas or electric.
- (B) A combination utility company shall apply the payments from residential customers to their gas and electric accounts separately and shall apportion the payments based on the total balance for each service, including any arrearage plus the current month's charge(s). For purposes of applying these payments:
  - (1) For customers billed only for services provided by the combination utility company, the company shall apply payments first to past due amounts, then to current regulated charges, and finally to any non-regulated charges.
  - (2) For customers billed by the combination utility company for any competitive services provided by either a competitive retail natural gas supplier and/or a competitive retail electric provider, the company shall apply payments as provided for in paragraph (J) of rule 4901:1-29-12 and paragraph (H) of rule 4901:1-10-33 of the Administrative Code.
- (C) Whenever a residential customer receiving both gas and electric service from a combination utility company has received a disconnection of service notice, the company shall give the customer each of the following options:
  - (1) An extended payment plan for both gas and electric as provided for in rule 4901:1-18-04 of the Administrative Code.
  - (2) An extended payment plan to retain either gas or electric service as chosen by the customer. Such extended payment plan shall include an extended payment plan as provided in rule 4901:1-18-04 of the Administrative Code.
- (D) If a residential customer of a combination utility company who has entered into one extended payment plan for both gas and electric service receives a disconnection of service notice and notifies the company of an inability to pay the full amount due under

such plan, the company shall offer the customer, if eligible pursuant to paragraph (A) of rule 4901:1-18-04 of the Administrative Code, another payment plan to maintain both services. The company shall give the customer the opportunity to retain only one service by paying the defaulted payment plan portion attributable to that service and by continuing payment on the portion of the extended payment plan attributable to that service subject to paragraph (B) of rule 4901:1-18-05 of the Administrative Code.

- (E) If both the gas and electric service of a residential customer of a combination utility have been discontinued for nonpayment, the company shall reconnect both services, or either service, as designated by the customer, pursuant to rule 4901:1-18-06 of the Administrative Code.
- (F) The combination utility company shall in its disconnection of service notice, as provided for in Chapter 4901:1-18 of the Administrative Code, advise combination residential customers of their rights to select the service(s) for retention or reconnection as provided for in paragraphs (C), (D), and (E) of this rule. The notice shall state with specificity the conditions under which customers may exercise their rights and shall state the telephone number and business address of a company representative to be contacted to inquire about those rights.
- (G) For a customer who has received a disconnection of service notice and who contacts the combination utility company, the company shall inform the customer of the total past due amount for each service, and with respect to the extended payment plans available under this rule, the monthly payment due on the past due amount for each service.

**4901:1-18-11 Insufficient reasons for refusing or disconnecting service.**

The company shall not refuse service to or disconnect service to any applicant/customer for any of the following reasons:

- (A) Failure to pay for service furnished to a former customer unless the former customer and the new applicant for service continue to be members of the same household.
- (B) Failure to pay a nonresidential account.
- (C) Failure to pay any amount which is in bona fide dispute. Where the customer has registered a complaint with the commission's public interest center or filed a formal complaint with the commission which reasonably asserts a bona fide dispute, the company shall not disconnect service if the customer pays either the undisputed portion of the bill, if known or can reasonably be determined, or the amount billed for the same billing period in the previous year.
- (D) Failure to pay any non-regulated service charges.

**4901:1-18-12 Restrictive language prohibition.**

Except as provided in rules 4901:5-37 and 4901:5-25-06 of the Administrative Code or other commission-approved curtailment provisions, no natural gas company or electric distribution utility shall deny service to a prospective customer or discontinue service to a present customer because the company would be or is providing only auxiliary, stand-by or emergency service as an alternative energy source.

Upon application to and approval by the commission, a natural gas company or electric distribution utility may file a separate applicable tariff containing rates which reflect the costs incurred by that company to provide such services.