Shut off insert: What You can do

A Shut-off Notice: What You Can Do | EVERSOURCE

All gas and electric customers of Eversource have certain rights. This pamphlet briefly explains those rights with respect to the shut-off notice you have received.

The enclosed shut-off notice indicates that your electric or gas service may be shut off after the due date shown, if you do not pay your past due balance or make a payment arrangement. You may also prevent service shut-off from November 1 to May 1, or during the period specified, by following the steps to apply for one or more of the protections described below.

Disputing Your Bill

If you have a question or complaint about your bill, call us and speak to a Customer Service Representative. If you are not satisfied, you have seven days to request that a Company Review Officer review your dispute. The Review Officer will issue a decision within 10 days. If you disagree with the Review Officer's decision, you may request, in writing to the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA), within 10 days, that PURA further investigate your dispute. If you disagree with the PURA report, you may request, within 10 days, a hearing by PURA to look into your billing dispute. We will not shut off your service for the reasons being disputed for as long as these dispute procedures are followed, provided you continue to pay current bill amount during this period.

Disputing a Payment Arrangement

If you are unable to reach a satisfactory Payment Arrangement with our Customer Service Representative, you may ask to speak with a Company Review Officer. If you disagree with a Review Officer's decision concerning a Payment Arrangement, you may appeal within 10 days to PURA. If you disagree with PURA's decision, you may request a hearing before PURA. During your appeal, your service will not be shut off, as long as you continue to pay your current and undisputed bill amounts during this period. You may contact the Public Utilities Regulatory Authority Office of Education, Outreach and Enforcement Customer Assistance line toll-free at 800-382-4586 for more information about disputing a payment arrangement.

Medical Protection

You may be eligible for medical protection status if anyone in your home is seriously ill or has a life-threatening situation. To establish this, have your registered physician, advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) or physician assistant (PA) complete the medical certification of illness form online via our Eversource medical web portal at Eversource.com/MDform within 14 days. You must continue to pay current bills and arrange for payment of past-due amounts while service is continued.

If the length of the serious illness is not specified, the medical certification of illness form must be renewed every 15 days. If the registered physician, APRN or PA has specified the length of the serious illness but the serious illness extends beyond that date, the certification must be renewed before it expires. The company may dispute the validity of any medical certification of illness form with PURA.

If a registered physician, APRN or PA certifies that someone in your home has a serious illness, your electrical or natural gas service will be protected from shut-off during the period of serious illness, as certified by your registered physician, APRN or PA between November 1 and May 1 (see "Winter Protection"). In addition, if the registered physician, APRN or PA certifies that the medical condition is life-threatening, your service will not be shut off at any time during the period certified by your registered physician, APRN or PA. You will only be protected from shut-off during the period certified by your registered physician, APRN or PA. At the end of this period, you will receive a notification that your registered physician, APRN or PA must complete a new medical certification of illness form via our Eversource medical web portal to continue to be protected from shut-off. Please note that state regulations allow Eversource to contest a medical certification of illness.

Medical Protection status does not release you from your financial obligation to pay the balance due on your account or from normal collection activities.

Hardship Defined

Conn. Agencies Regs. § 16-3-100(a)(6) defines hardship as a customer who lacks the financial resources to pay for the entire electricity or natural gas bill, including (but not limited to):

- Those receiving local, state or federal public assistance, including: Aid to the Blind, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Aid for the Elderly, Aid to the Disabled, Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income, General Assistance and those whose major source of financial support is derived from Social Security, United States Department of Veterans Affairs or Unemployment Compensation benefits.
- Those who are heads of households and unemployed, and where household income is less than 300% of the poverty level.
- Those who are seriously ill, whose homes include residents who are seriously ill or who have a life-threatening situation (see "Medical Protection").
- Those whose incomes fall below 125% of the poverty level as determined by the federal government.
- Those whose circumstances threaten a deprivation of the necessities of life for themselves or dependent members of their households if payment of a delinquent utility bill is required. Necessities of life include (but are not limited to) food, clothing, shelter, medical expenses and heat.

With a hardship designation, customers are eligible for balance forgiveness programs and winter protection.

Winter Protection (November 1 to May 1)

Winter Protection prevents shut-off between November 1 and May 1 for residential customers who use electricity or heat with natural gas, have an overdue balance and qualify for hardship status (see "Hardship Defined"). To determine your eligibility for hardship status, contact Eversource, your local Community Action Agency or 2-1-1 United Way to find your local agency. You will be required to provide proof of hardship status within 60 days of your claim. To continue to receive service after May 1, you must arrange for payments on past-due amounts and make sure that your arrangements are up to date as of May 1. Winter Protection does not release you from your financial obligation to pay the balance due on your account, nor does it protect your account from normal collection activities.

Third Party Notification

With proper authorization, we can send a copy of your shut-off notice to another individual whom you designate. This person will not be responsible for payment of the bill. Call Eversource Customer Service to have them send you the Third Party Notification form that both parties will need to sign for this notification.

Billing Rights

Eversource is always working to serve you better. A complete explanation of your rights as an Eversource customer is available upon request. If you have questions, please contact our Customer Service representatives:

Electric customers: 800-286-2000
Gas customers: 800-989-0900

You can contact PURA by email at pura.information@ct.gov, by calling toll-free at 800-382-4586, or by writing to:

Public Utilities Regulatory Authority Consumer Affairs Unit
10 Franklin Square
New Britain, CT 06051

This insert is paid for by Eversource customers.

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