

Kentucky Public Service Commission

Road Map to Utility Services in Kentucky

SEWAGE

ELECTRIC

Your quick Reference Guide to:

- ✓ *Obtaining Utility Services*
- ✓ *Managing Utility Bills*
- ✓ *Disconnection of Utility Services*
- ✓ *Reconnection of Utility Services*
- ✓ *Utility Deposits*
- ✓ *Resolving your Utility Problems*
- ✓ *Contacting the Commission*

NATURAL GAS

WATER

TELEPHONE

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OBTAINING UTILITY SERVICES

- **CONTACT YOUR UTILITY.** Usually, utility service can be connected within seventy-two (72) hours of the date requested on your application. Occasionally, circumstances may require special arrangements in order to provide new service.
- **UTILITIES MUST MAINTAIN REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS.** In addition, utilities maintain toll-free telephone services for their customers during their regular business hours.
- **KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.** A listing of customer rights is displayed in each utility's business office. In addition, the utility's approved operating policies (tariffs) are displayed for your review.
- **BE PRESENT AT THE UTILITY'S INSPECTION OF YOUR SERVICE.**
Before providing new electric, gas, water and sewer service, the utility will inspect the condition of your new service. Prior to the inspection, the utility will notify you of the time when the inspection will occur.



MANAGING UTILITY BILLS

- **LEARN TO READ YOUR METER.** Meters measure the amount of utility service that you have used. Your meter must be read by the utility at least quarterly (annually for customer read meters). Utilities are allowed to occasionally estimate your bill but must clearly mark your bill accordingly.
- **PAY YOUR BILL BY THE DUE DATE.** You must pay your regular bill and any partial payment plan by the due date. Many utilities charge a late payment fee for accounts which are past due. The late payment fee is not cumulative but is limited to the amount owed on the current bill.
- **ARRANGE TO PAY YOUR UTILITY BILLS IF YOU PLAN TO BE AWAY** for an extended period of time.
- **MAKE SURE HIGH BILLS ARE INVESTIGATED.** Notify your utility if you notice an unusually high utility consumption.
- **CONSIDER A BUDGET PAYMENT PLAN** for your electric and gas utility service. Budget plans allow payment of a fixed monthly amount based on a year's average bills.
- **NEGOTIATE A PARTIAL PAYMENT PLAN.** If you cannot pay your entire bill and have received a disconnection notice, meet with the utility and negotiate a payment plan. You may be able to spread your past due payments over several future bills until your account is current.
- **INSPECT YOUR UTILITY FIXTURES REGULARLY.** Find and repair leaks, look for utility conservation opportunities, and consider energy efficient models when replacing refrigeration, heating, and cooling units.
- **NOTIFY YOUR UTILITY IF YOU PLAN TO MOVE.** You must give the utility at least three (3) days notice of your plans to terminate service in order to avoid responsibility for charges after you are gone.

DISCONNECTION OF UTILITY SERVICES

- **YOUR UTILITY SERVICE MAY BE DISCONNECTED IF YOU:**
 - fail to pay your utility bill by the due date,
 - fail to keep your payment agreement,
 - do not pay the requested deposit,
 - refuse access to the utility's equipment,
 - do not comply with utility, state or local rules and codes related to your service,
 - have a dangerous condition related to your service, or
 - illegally use the service.
- **THE UTILITY MUST GIVE YOU ADVANCE NOTICE** before disconnecting your service (except in cases of dangerous conditions, illegal use of service, or a broken payment agreement).
- Your gas or electric utility must give you ten (10) days written notice before disconnecting your service for non-payment. Service cannot be disconnected before 27 days after the date of your original bill.
- Your water, sewer, and telephone utility must give you five (5) days written notice before disconnecting your service for non-payment. Service cannot be disconnected before 20 days after the date of your original bill.
- **YOUR UTILITY SERVICE MAY NOT BE DISCONNECTED IF YOU:**
 - Pay the amount owed prior to the actual disconnect.
 - Receive a disconnect notice between November and March and present a Certificate of Need issued by the Kentucky Human Resources Cabinet during your 10-day notice period (and agree to a repayment plan).
 - Negotiate and keep a payment agreement.

MEDICAL HARDSHIP

- **IF YOU HAVE A LIFE THREATENING ILLNESS** in your household and receive a disconnect notice, your service will be continued for 30 days provided that you obtain and present a signed statement from your doctor, registered nurse, or public health official. The statement must indicate that the loss of utility service will aggravate the illness. You are responsible for paying the utility for the service used during this extension period.



RECONNECTING YOUR UTILITY SERVICE

- **TO HAVE YOUR SERVICE RECONNECTED YOU MUST PAY** all past due bills, including a deposit and reconnection fee if required.
- **YOUR EXISTING SERVICE WILL BE RECONNECTED** within twenty-four (24) hours of paying the bill or negotiating an agreement with the utility.

SPECIAL RULES APPLY TO YOUR GAS AND ELECTRIC SERVICE DURING THE WINTER MONTHS (NOVEMBER THROUGH MARCH)

- **YOUR SERVICE CAN BE RECONNECTED** during November through March without a deposit if you:
 - present to the utility a Certificate of Need issued by the Kentucky Human Resources Cabinet,
 - pay one third (1/3) of your outstanding bill (\$200 maximum),
 - accept referral to the Human Resources' Weatherization Program, and
 - agree to a repayment schedule that will pay your outstanding bill.

- **IF YOU OWE MORE THAN \$600 AND APPLY FOR RECONNECTION** during November through March, your service will be reconnected if you :
 - agree to a repayment plan that will pay all current charges, and
 - make good faith reductions in your outstanding bill, consistent with your ability to pay.



UTILITY DEPOSITS

- **THE UTILITY MAY REQUIRE A DEPOSIT** from all applicants (except winter hardship reconnects) for service.
- **DEPOSIT AMOUNTS ARE GENERALLY BASED ON THE UTILITY USE** at your address or on your type of account. If you are billed monthly, the deposit is based upon 2/12 of your actual or estimated annual bill (for a new service). Customers billed every other month may be requested to deposit 3/12, and 4/12 may be required from customers billed quarterly.
- **EXISTING CUSTOMERS MAY ALSO BE REQUESTED TO PAY DEPOSITS.**
New or additional deposits may be requested from customers who fail to make payments on time or who have had a change in usage.
- **YOUR UTILITY SERVICE MAY BE DENIED OR DISCONNECTED IF YOU FAIL TO PAY THE DEPOSIT.**
However, existing customers who receive a disconnect notice for failure to pay a deposit may negotiate a partial payment plan with the utility.
- **UTILITIES MUST PAY INTEREST ON YOUR DEPOSIT.**
Interest on your deposit must be paid to you or credited to your bill each year, according to the rate prescribed by law.
- **YOU MAY ASK THE UTILITY TO RECALCULATE YOUR DEPOSIT AMOUNT** if the utility holds the deposit for 18 months.
- **UTILITIES MUST PROVIDE A RECEIPT OF DEPOSIT** to each customer showing the name of the customer, the date, and amount of the deposit.

RESOLVING YOUR UTILITY PROBLEMS

- **FIRST, CONTACT THE UTILITY.** If the utility representative cannot resolve your problem, speak with the supervisor.
- **IF THE PROBLEM IS STILL NOT RESOLVED,** contact the Commission's Consumer Services staff. The investigator will:
 - provide information about the Commission's rules and state laws,
 - contact the utility for information and documentation regarding your account, and
 - attempt to resolve your problem through discussion with the utility.
- **IF THE PROBLEM IS STILL NOT RESOLVED,** you may file a formal complaint and request a hearing before the Commission.
 - Blank forms are available from the Consumer Services staff.
 - After your fully completed form has been submitted and accepted by the Commission's Executive Director's office, a hearing may be scheduled.
 - The hearing, similar to a court hearing, will be held before the Commission or a hearing examiner.
 - You may be represented by lawyer at the hearing although it is not required (unless the complaint is filed by a Kentucky corporation). The utility will be represented by a lawyer.
 - The Commission will consider the testimony presented, review the evidence, and make a decision which will be mailed to all parties of the complaint.



- **THE UTILITY WILL NOT DISCONTINUE** your service if you have a billing complaint as long as you pay the undisputed amount of your bill and continue to pay your monthly bills.

CONTACTING THE COMMISSION

**KENTUCKY PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
211 SOWER BOULEVARD
P.O. BOX 615
FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY 40602**

The Kentucky Public Service Commission regulates the rates and services of investor-owned electric, natural gas, telephone, water and sewer utilities, rural electric and telephone cooperatives, and water districts and associations.

The Commission does not regulate the TVA supplied electric utilities, utilities owned and operated by units of local government (except for natural gas safety and wholesale rates), sanitation districts, and cable television companies.

You may reach the Kentucky Public Service Commission by calling (502) 564-3940. Utility complaints may be reported by calling toll free 1-800-772-4636.

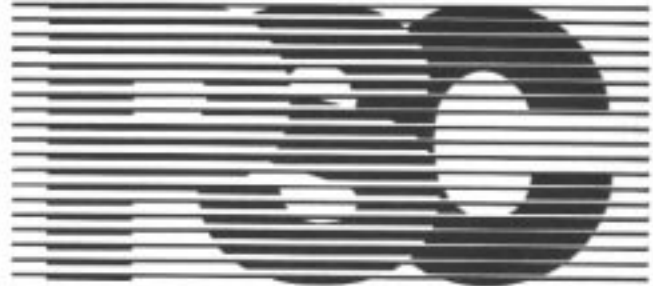


TDD NUMBER FOR SPEECH AND HEARING IMPAIRED

- **IF YOU HAVE A HEARING AND/OR SPEECH IMPAIRMENT** and have access to a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf, you may call 1+800+648-6056 (TDD only) or 1+800+648-6057 (Voice only), to communicate with hearing telephone users. The call will be answered by a special operator trained to translate text telephone messages into speech for hearing telephone users and vice versa. No charges apply to local calls made using this system.
- **PERSONS USING A NON-VOICE COMMUNICATIONS DEVICE** when contacting the Public Service Commission to resolve a customer complaint will receive priority service in the resolution of the complaint.

LINK-UP KENTUCKY

- **LINK-UP KENTUCKY** is an assistance program that helps provide telephone service to Kentuckians who receive either: Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Medicaid, Food Stamps or Supplemental Security Income. The program provides 50 percent of the cost to install and connect telephone service (up to \$30). Persons desiring to participate in this program should call their local telephone business office.



**PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION
OF KENTUCKY**