

Chapter 13—Service and Billing Practices for Residential Customers
of Electric, Gas and Water Utilities



(2) A utility may not refuse to commence service to an applicant for any of the following reasons:

(A) Failure to pay for merchandise, appliances or services not subject to commission jurisdiction as an integral part of the utility service provided by a utility;

(B) Failure to pay the bill of another customer, unless the applicant who is seeking service received substantial benefit and use of the service to that customer, or unless the applicant is the legal guarantor for a delinquent bill. In this instance, the utility refusing to commence service, shall have the burden of proof to show that the applicant received substantial benefit and use of the service, or that the applicant is the legal guarantor, provided that such burden shall not apply if the applicant refuses to cooperate in providing or obtaining information she/he/it does or should have regarding the applicant's residence history. To meet that burden the utility must have reliable evidence that:

1. The applicant and that customer resided together at the premises where the bill was incurred and during the period the bill was incurred; and
2. The bill was incurred within the last seven (7) years; and
3. The utility has attempted to collect the unpaid bill from the customer of record; and
4. At the time of the request for service, the bill remains unpaid and not in dispute.

(3) The utility shall commence service at an existing residential service location in accordance with this rule as close as reasonably possible to the day specified by the customer for service to commence, but no later than, three (3) business days following the day specified by the customer for service to commence provided that the applicant has complied with all requirements of this rule. When service to a new residential location is requested, the utility shall commence service in accordance with this rule as close as reasonably possible to the day specified by the applicant for service to commence, but normally no later than three (3) business days following the day that all required construction is completed and all inspections have been made.

(4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this rule, a utility may refuse to commence service temporarily for reasons of maintenance, health, safety or a state of emergency until the reason for such refusal has been resolved.

(5) Any provision of this rule may be waived or varied by the commission for good cause.

(6) The requirements of the rule shall be implemented by the utility no later than November 1, 2004.

AUTHORITY: sections 386.250(6) and 393.140(II), RSMo 2000 and 393.130(I), RSMo Supp. 2003. Original rule filed Nov. 3, 2003, effective May 30, 2004.*

**Original authority: 386.250, RSMo 1939, amended 1963, 1967, 1977, 1980, 1987, 1988, 1991, 1993, 1995, 1996; 393.130, RSMo 1939, amended 1949, 1967, 1969, 2002; 393.140, RSMo 1939, amended 1949, 1967.*

4 CSR 240-13.040 Inquiries

PURPOSE: This rule establishes procedures to be followed when customers make inquiries of utilities so the inquiries are handled in a reasonable manner.

(1) A utility shall adopt procedures which will ensure the prompt and thorough receipt, investigation and, where possible, resolution of inquiries. The utility shall submit the procedures to the commission and the utility shall notify the commission and the public counsel of any substantive changes in these procedures prior to implementation.

(2) A utility shall establish personnel procedures which, at a minimum, insure that—

(A) Qualified personnel shall be available and prepared at all times during normal business hours to receive and respond to all customer inquiries, service requests and complaints. A utility shall make necessary arrangements to insure that customers unable to communicate in the English language receive assistance;

(B) Qualified personnel responsible for and authorized to enter into written agreements on behalf of the utility shall be available at all times during normal business hours to respond to customer inquiries and complaints;

(C) Qualified personnel shall be available at all times to receive and initiate response to customer contacts regarding any discontinuance of service or emergency condition occurring within the utility's service area; and

(D) Names, addresses and telephone numbers of personnel designated and authorized to receive and respond to the requests and directives of the commission regarding customer inquiries, service requests and complaints shall be provided to the commission.

(3) A utility shall prepare, in written form, information which in layman's terms summarizes the rights and responsibilities of the utility and its customers in accordance with this chapter. The form shall be submitted to the consumer services department of the Missouri Public Service Commission, and to the Office of the Public Counsel. This written information shall be displayed prominently, and shall be available at all utility office locations open to the general public, and shall be mailed or otherwise delivered to each residential customer of the utility if requested by the customer. The information shall be delivered or mailed to each new customer of the utility upon the commencement of service and shall be available at all times upon request. The written information shall indicate conspicuously that it is being provided in accordance with the rules of the commission, and shall contain information concerning, but not limited to:

(A) Billing and estimated billing procedures;

(B) Methods for customer verification of billing accuracy;

(C) Customer payment requirements and procedures;

(D) Deposit and guarantee requirements;

(E) Conditions of termination, discontinuance and reconnection of service;

(F) Procedures for handling inquiries;

(G) Explanation of meter reading procedures which would enable a customer to read his/her own meter;

(H) A procedure where a customer may avoid discontinuance of service during a period of absence;

(I) Complaint procedures under 4 CSR 240-2.070;

(J) The telephone number and address of a customer services office of the Missouri Public Service Commission, the commission's 800 telephone number, and the statement that the company is regulated by the Missouri Public Service Commission;

(K) The address and telephone number of the Office of Public Counsel and a statement of the function of that office; and

(L) If the utility is a gas distribution company, an explanation of the function of the purchased gas adjustment clause.

(4) At all of its public business offices, a utility shall make available for public inspection a copy of this chapter and the utility's tariffs. At these offices, conspicuous signs shall be posted which indicate that this information is available for public inspection.