



# CUSTOMER FACTS

## Electric Service Disconnects

Your service agreement with a Retail Electric Provider (REP) is a legal contract, and if you fail to pay your bill on time or violate other parts of your agreement, the provider may have your electric service disconnected. If your power is shut off, you will probably have to pay disconnection and reconnection fees and a significant deposit to have your service reconnected. By understanding your obligations and rights regarding the electric service disconnection process, you may be able to avoid the cost and hassle of losing your electric service.

### When can my electric service be/not be disconnected?

Under the rules of the Public Utility Commission of Texas, a REP **may** disconnect service **after proper notice**:

- If you don't pay your bill on time or don't make arrangements with the REP to pay the charges you owe over time
- If you don't meet the terms of any deferred payment arrangement you've made with your REP
- If you use your electric service in an unsafe manner as outlined in your service agreement
- If you fail to pay deposits as required by your REP

A REP **may** disconnect service **without prior notice**:

- If there's an immediate safety issue
- If the service is unauthorized or hooked up without a service contract
- If the power company's equipment, such as the meter, has been tampered with

A provider **cannot** disconnect your service for the following reasons:

- If a previous resident of your home didn't pay his/her electric bill on time
- For not paying charges unrelated to electric service
- For charges that are in dispute until the dispute has been settled in favor of the REP
- For charges that didn't appear on your bill or were billed in error
- For charges due to under billing of service that was provided more than six months before your current billing period.
- If the National Weather Service issues a heat advisory or a cold alert in your area
- For failure to pay an estimated bill other than a bill rendered pursuant to an approved meter-reading plan

### What happens when my electric service contract is terminated for non-payment?

In cases where there is no immediate safety issue or evidence of theft of service, the REP must give you written notice of its intention to shut off your power at least ten (10) days before the disconnection date. The notice must tell you why your service is being disconnected, what you can do to avoid disconnection, the charges you will have to pay for disconnection and reconnection, and the total amount that's overdue.

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The notice must also tell you how your deposit will be applied to your overdue charges, explain how you can make arrangements to pay your overdue bill over time, inform you about government programs to assist low-income customers, and tell you how the company will try to collect your unpaid charges if you do not pay or don't make deferred payment arrangements before the shut-off date.

There are special rules for disconnecting service for seriously ill or disabled customers whose health would be impaired by shutting off power, customers served by energy assistance programs, and residents of master-metered apartments.

If you fail to meet your obligations by the disconnection date, your service may be shut off on the next day unless that day is a weekend or holiday.

#### **How can I have my electric service reconnected?**

You can have your service reconnected, usually within 48 hours, by paying all overdue charges and disconnection and reconnections fees and making a deposit equal to one-fifth of your average annual billings or the next two months' estimated billings, whichever is greater. A REP may request an additional deposit from an existing customer if a termination or disconnect notice has been issued or the account has been disconnected within the previous 12 months. You can pay a priority reconnection fee for faster reconnection.

#### **QUESTIONS:**

**Call:** 1-888-782-8477, in Austin 512-936-7120  
(TTY 512-936-7136) (FAX 512-936-7003)

**Visit:** [www.puc.texas.gov](http://www.puc.texas.gov)

**Email:** [consumer@puc.texas.gov](mailto:consumer@puc.texas.gov)

#### **COMPLAINTS:**

**Call:** 1-888-782-8477, in Austin 512-936-7120  
(TTY 512-936-7136) (FAX 512-936-7003)

**Write:** PUC - Consumer Protection Division

P.O. Box 13326, Austin, TX 78711-3326

**Online:** <http://www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/complaint/Complaint.aspx>