

PUC Responsibilities

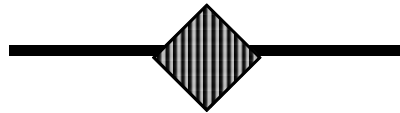
The PUC has quality of service territory assignment jurisdiction over all natural gas and electric companies in South Dakota.

The PUC also has rate regulation authority over investor-owned natural gas and electric companies. Those companies are:

- ◆ Black Hills Power & Light
- ◆ MidAmerican Energy
- ◆ Montana Dakota Utilities
- ◆ Xcel Energy
- ◆ NorthWestern Energy
- ◆ Otter Tail Power
- ◆ People's Natural Gas
- ◆ South Dakota Intrastate Pipeline

Rural electric cooperatives have their policies and procedures approved by the cooperative's membership. Municipal utilities have their policies and procedures approved by their city councils.

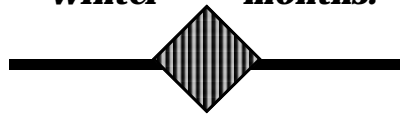
The information in this brochure has been designed to answer typical questions asked by consumers.



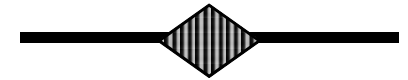
Winter Disconnection Rules:

Between November 1 and March 1, an additional 30-day period is added to the regular 30-day notice.

***Service can be
disconnected during
winter months.***



Public Utilities Commission
State Capitol Building
500 E Capitol
Pierre SD 57501
Call: 1-800-332-1782
www.state.sd.us/puc



Natural Gas & Electric Service Rules



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How do I establish credit with a utility?

Prior payment records with a utility company are the main factors in determining credit standing when applying for new service. If you have not used the utility company before, the utility may ask for other credit information.

Can a utility refuse to provide service to me?

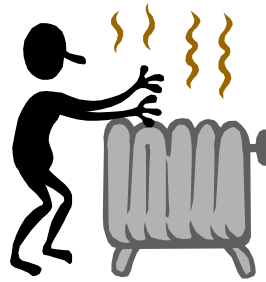
YES. A utility may only refuse service if:

- ◆ You are in debt to the same utility for past bills and you refuse to pay those bills.
- ◆ You do not agree to pay a reasonable deposit, advance payment or installation charges.
- ◆ You are trying to restore service to a household with a delinquent bill, and no attempts are made to pay the old debt.
- ◆ You refuse to provide correct information about your past utility service, your last employment or your previous address.

Why do I have to pay a deposit?

Utility companies may request a deposit for *unsatisfactory or unknown credit*. The credit categories are defined below:

Satisfactory credit means that within the last year you have not had your service disconnected for failing to pay a bill and you have received fewer than three disconnection notices. No deposit can be required if your credit record meets this definition.



Unsatisfactory credit means that you have had one or more disconnections in the last year of service, three or more disconnection notices in the last year, or you have an undisputed overdue bill with that utility. If any of these conditions exist, the utility may require a desposit not to exceed one-sixth (or two month's average usage) of the estimated annual bill. Instead of a deposit, the utility may place you on an early payment plan or ask you to provide a guarantor. A guarantor is someone, usually a relative or employer, who signs a contract agreeing to pay an amount no larger than the deposit, if you fail to pay the bill.

Unknown credit means that you have no known utility payment history. In this case you have the option of establishing credit or the utility may require a deposit, place you on an early payment plan or ask for a guarantor.

The utility company will normally hold this deposit for one year, and must refund it to you when you have established satisfactory credit. Each utility is required to pay interest on this deposit at an annual rate of seven percent.

Can my service be disconnected?

A utility may disconnect for **nonpayment of a bill** when all of the following conditions exist:

- ◆ The date of the disconnection is at least 30 days from the postmark date of the bill.
- ◆ You have received written notice of the utility's intention to disconnect.

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- ◆ You have been unwilling to enter into a reasonable agreement with the utility to pay the bill.
- ◆ There is no legitimate dispute with the bill.

Other reasons for disconnection:

- ◆ Utility companies may disconnect if you don't let them read your meter. (This may include having an unchained dog on your property.)
- ◆ Your utility service may be disconnected if you refuse to allow the utility company to inspect its equipment on your property or investigate possible hazardous conditions.
- ◆ A disconnection may also occur if you fail to pay an increased deposit.
- ◆ You may be disconnected if you fail to keep a previously arranged agreement to pay a debt. No notice is required to disconnect due to a missed payment through an arrangement.

Can I be disconnected if I have a medical condition?

Yes, however, if a doctor provides a statement to the utility indicating that a disconnection would aggravate your medical condition or the medical condition of someone in your household, the disconnection can be postponed for 30 days.

It is very important to note that such a medical postponement is only good for a **single 30-day period**.