

GE99-004

GE 99-004

NorthWestern
PUBLIC SERVICE

600 Market Street West
Huron, SD 57350-1500
Telephone: 605-352-8411
Facsimile: 605-353-7631
Internet: www.northwestern.com

Russell C. Molstad, Jr.
Corporate Attorney
Telephone: 605-353-7504
Facsimile: 605-353-7519
rmolstad@northwestern.com

May 28, 1999

RECEIVED

JUN 01 1999

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

Mr. William Bullard
Executive Director
S.D. Public Utilities Commission
State Capitol Building
500 E Capitol Ave
Pierre SD 57501-5070

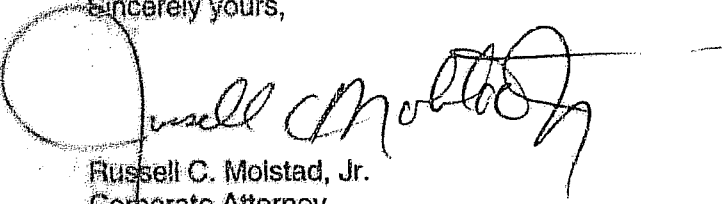
Re: New Customer Handbook

Dear Mr. Bullard,

I am enclosing with this letter eight copies of NorthWestern Public Service's New Customer Handbook for your review and approval pursuant to Administrative Rule 20:10:16:02.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and would be happy to answer any questions that you might have. Please contact me with any comments or questions that you might have. Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,


Russell C. Molstad, Jr.
Corporate Attorney

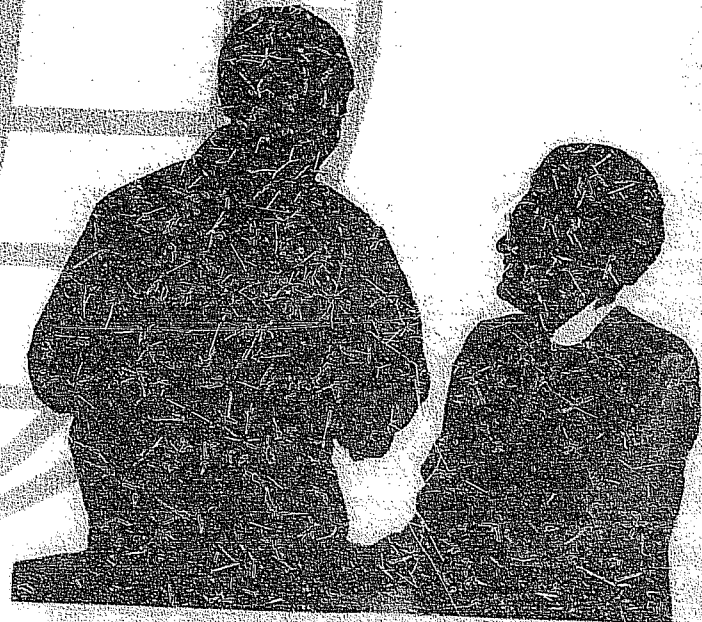
ss

enclosures

cc: Kim Thompson-Rieger
Warren Lotsberg
Rod Leyendecker

America's Best Service Experience

New Customer Handbook

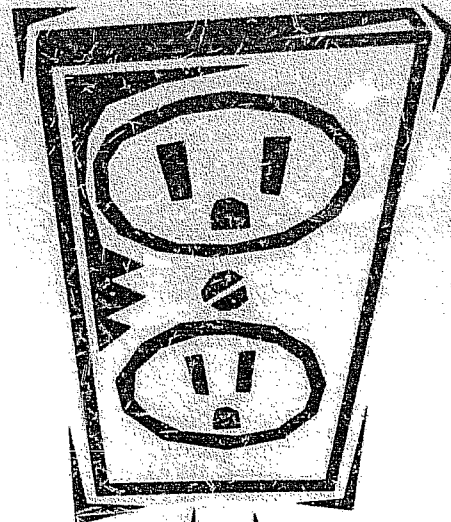


NorthWestern
PUBLIC SERVICE

NorthWesternTM
PUBLIC SERVICE

except for customers using the Early Pay option to establish credit. This time frame will be waived in cases of fraud, illegal use, or when it is clearly indicated that the customer is preparing to leave. If your bill becomes delinquent, NorthWestern will provide written notice giving you an additional 10 days in which to pay the bill to avoid disconnection.

3. If this is your first disconnection notice, NorthWestern will attempt to notify you by telephone, personal visit, or certified mail and provide you the information about your right to appeal to the PUC.
4. If you have been unwilling to pay the bill in full or enter into a reasonable agreement, service will be disconnected.
5. No disconnection will be made if a bona fide or just dispute concerning the bill exists. A bona fide dispute is defined by your paying the undisputed portion of the bill and contacting the PUC within the required time frame.
6. Residential disconnection may be postponed for one 30-day period by presenting a physician's certificate stating that disconnection would aggravate an existing medical emergency.
7. Residential disconnection will not be made from November 1 to March 31 without adding 30 days to the time periods described in item #2.
8. Service will not be disconnected on any Friday, Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday or at any time when NorthWestern's business offices are not open to the public.
9. If you receive both gas and electric service, you may have payments applied to either portion in order to avoid disconnection of that service.
10. In a landlord-tenant situation, where the service is in the landlord's name, NorthWestern will not disconnect the service until the tenant has been offered the service in their name.



**Creating
America's
Best Service
Experience™**

Ways to serve you

2

How you are billed

3

About your
bill

4

Payment
options

5

Understanding
your bill

6-9

Your rights as a
customer

10-12

COMMENTS WELCOME

NorthWestern wants you to be satisfied with your electric and natural gas service. We understand that sometimes a question, misunderstanding or complaint may develop. And, we want to hear about it! Our team members are trained to help you. Just call or stop by your local office. We will make a full and prompt investigation of all feedback received. Please address any written complaints to:

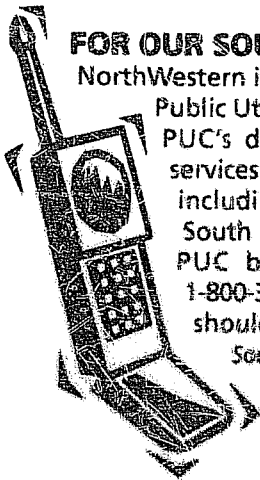
NorthWestern Customer Advocate
33 3rd Street SE
Huron, SD 57350
E-mail: advocate@northwestern.com

IN CASE OF A DISPUTE

Whenever you advise NorthWestern, before the disconnection of service, of any part of the billing, charges, or service in dispute, NorthWestern will:

1. Investigate the dispute promptly;
2. Advise you of the investigation and its result;
3. Attempt to resolve the dispute; and
4. Withhold disconnection of service during such investigation, provided that you pay the undisputed portion of your bill.

If the dispute is not resolved, South Dakota customers have the option of appealing to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) within 10 working days after the disconnection notice was sent.

**FOR OUR SOUTH DAKOTA CUSTOMERS**

NorthWestern is regulated by the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (PUC). It is the PUC's duty to oversee the rates and services of all public utilities in the state, including approval of all rate changes. South Dakota customers may reach the PUC by calling (605) 773-3201 or 1-800-332-1782. Written correspondence should be directed to:

South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
500 East Capitol
Pierre, SD 57501

Once a month you receive a bill from NorthWestern for the electricity and/or natural gas you have used the previous month. The bill you receive is based upon a meter reading or estimated energy use in the event your meter cannot be read. Your bill is figured according to rates that have been approved by the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission or that are filed with the city.

CALCULATING YOUR ELECTRIC USAGE...

Electricity is measured and sold by kilowatt hour (KWH). A KWH represents the amount of electricity required to operate a 100 watt bulb for 10 hours. Your bill shows the present and previous readings of your electric meter. Subtracting the smaller figure from the larger figure will give you the amount of electricity you have used measured in KWH.

Your KWH consumed multiplied times the charge per KWH in the proper rate schedule will result in the amount you will pay for the electricity you have used. In addition to the above amount, an electric purchased power adjustment, a customer charge, and taxes make up your complete monthly bill.

CALCULATING YOUR NATURAL GAS USAGE...

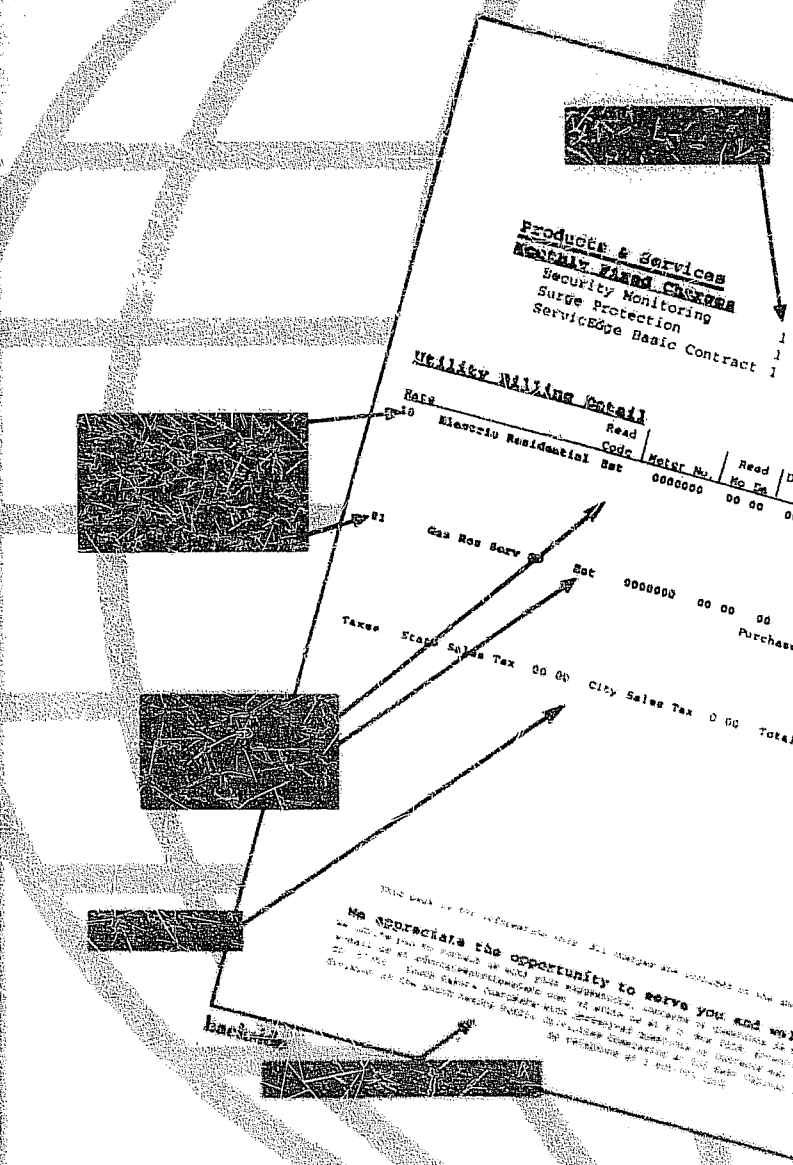
Natural gas is measured and sold by THERMS. A therm is a unit of heating equal to 100,000 BTU (British Thermal Units). Again, your bill shows the current and previous meter readings. Subtracting the previous meter reading from the current reading will give you the amount of natural gas you have used in that billing period. Multiplying that amount by the charge per THERM in the proper rate schedule will give you the amount you pay for the natural gas used. In addition to the above amount, a purchased gas adjustment, customer charge and taxes are applied to complete your bill.

METER READING

Your meter is read on approximately the same date each month (with some variation allowed for weekends and holidays). Your monthly bill reflects the amount of electricity or natural gas used since your last meter reading.



How to read the detailed portion of your bill

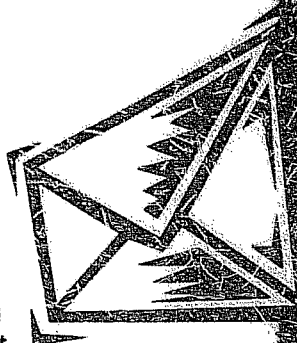


NorthWestern offers the following options in lieu of a deposit:

- Early Pay** - this option allows you to pay your NorthWestern bill within 10 days after you receive it while you establish credit.
- Reference Letter** - by simply providing a letter of reference from your previous energy provider, you automatically establish credit with NorthWestern.
- Credit Card Payment** - now you can pay your NorthWestern bill using your VISA, MasterCard or Discover card. Simply call our 24-hour Customer Service Center anytime you decide to pay your bill by credit card, and we'll take care of the rest.

PAYING YOUR BILL

You may pay your bill by mail. A send and return envelope is included with your bill for this purpose. Send the part of your bill that is marked "Return this portion of the bill with your payment." along with your check or money order. You may also pay your bill personally at your local NorthWestern office. For faster processing, please bring your statement with you. Some communities also have convenient drop boxes. Ask your local office for locations.

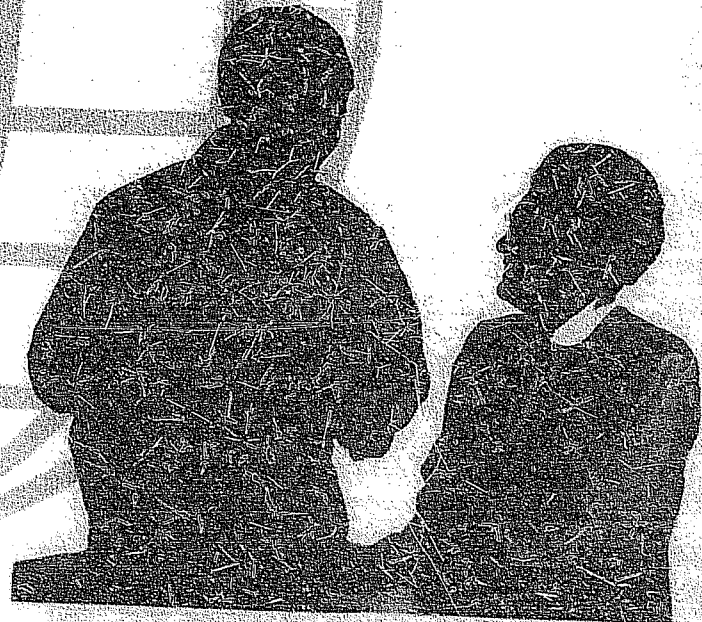


To make paying your bill even more convenient, NorthWestern offers the following options:

- Budget Payment Plan** - this option allows you to pay an equal amount each month on your NorthWestern bill. Since your usage is typically higher in the colder winter months, your bills are generally higher. By spreading the payments out throughout a twelve month period, you can budget your energy expenses and avoid high winter bills.
- Easy Bank Pay** - this option allows you to have your monthly payment automatically withdrawn from your checking, savings or credit card account on the day of your choice.

America's Best Service Experience

New Customer Handbook

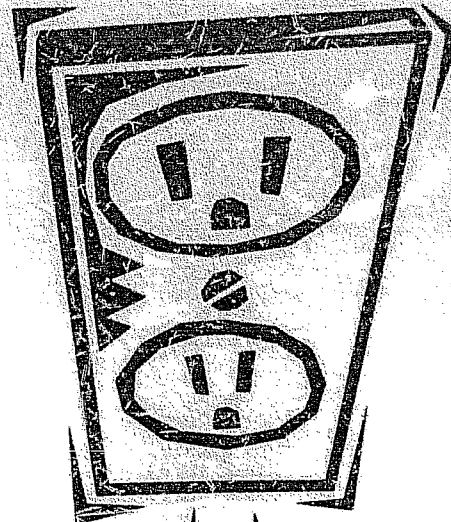


NorthWestern
PUBLIC SERVICE

NorthWesternTM
PUBLIC SERVICE

except for customers using the Early Pay option to establish credit. This time frame will be waived in cases of fraud, illegal use, or when it is clearly indicated that the customer is preparing to leave. If your bill becomes delinquent, NorthWestern will provide written notice giving you an additional 10 days in which to pay the bill to avoid disconnection.

3. If this is your first disconnection notice, NorthWestern will attempt to notify you by telephone, personal visit, or certified mail and provide you the information about your right to appeal to the PUC.
4. If you have been unwilling to pay the bill in full or enter into a reasonable agreement, service will be disconnected.
5. No disconnection will be made if a bona fide or just dispute concerning the bill exists. A bona fide dispute is defined by your paying the undisputed portion of the bill and contacting the PUC within the required time frame.
6. Residential disconnection may be postponed for one 30-day period by presenting a physician's certificate stating that disconnection would aggravate an existing medical emergency.
7. Residential disconnection will not be made from November 1 to March 31 without adding 30 days to the time periods described in item #2.
8. Service will not be disconnected on any Friday, Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday or at any time when NorthWestern's business offices are not open to the public.
9. If you receive both gas and electric service, you may have payments applied to either portion in order to avoid disconnection of that service.
10. In a landlord-tenant situation, where the service is in the landlord's name, NorthWestern will not disconnect the service until the tenant has been offered the service in their name.



**Creating
America's
Best Service
Experience™**

Ways to serve you

2

How you are billed

3

About your
bill

4

Payment
options

5

Understanding
your bill

6-9

Your rights as a
customer

10-12

COMMENTS WELCOME

NorthWestern wants you to be satisfied with your electric and natural gas service. We understand that sometimes a question, misunderstanding or complaint may develop. And, we want to hear about it! Our team members are trained to help you. Just call or stop by your local office. We will make a full and prompt investigation of all feedback received. Please address any written complaints to:

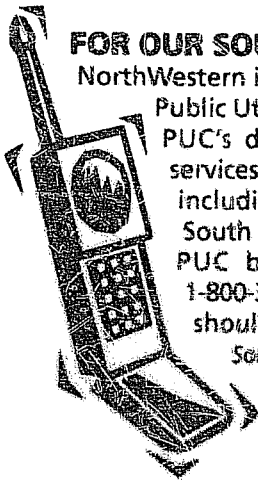
*NorthWestern Customer Advocate
33 3rd Street SE
Huron, SD 57350
E-mail: advocate@northwestern.com*

IN CASE OF A DISPUTE

Whenever you advise NorthWestern, before the disconnection of service, of any part of the billing, charges, or service in dispute, NorthWestern will:

1. Investigate the dispute promptly;
2. Advise you of the investigation and its result;
3. Attempt to resolve the dispute; and
4. Withhold disconnection of service during such investigation, provided that you pay the undisputed portion of your bill.

If the dispute is not resolved, South Dakota customers have the option of appealing to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) within 10 working days after the disconnection notice was sent.



FOR OUR SOUTH DAKOTA CUSTOMERS

NorthWestern is regulated by the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (PUC). It is the PUC's duty to oversee the rates and services of all public utilities in the state, including approval of all rate changes. South Dakota customers may reach the PUC by calling (605) 773-3201 or 1-800-332-1782. Written correspondence should be directed to:

*South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
500 East Capitol
Pierre, SD 57501*

Once a month you receive a bill from NorthWestern for the electricity and/or natural gas you have used the previous month. The bill you receive is based upon a meter reading or estimated energy use in the event your meter cannot be read. Your bill is figured according to rates that have been approved by the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission or that are filed with the city.

CALCULATING YOUR ELECTRIC USAGE...

Electricity is measured and sold by kilowatt hour (KWH). A KWH represents the amount of electricity required to operate a 100 watt bulb for 10 hours. Your bill shows the present and previous readings of your electric meter. Subtracting the smaller figure from the larger figure will give you the amount of electricity you have used measured in KWH.

Your KWH consumed multiplied times the charge per KWH in the proper rate schedule will result in the amount you will pay for the electricity you have used. In addition to the above amount, an electric purchased power adjustment, a customer charge, and taxes make up your complete monthly bill.

CALCULATING YOUR NATURAL GAS USAGE...

Natural gas is measured and sold by THERMS. A therm is a unit of heating equal to 100,000 BTU (British Thermal Units). Again, your bill shows the current and previous meter readings. Subtracting the previous meter reading from the current reading will give you the amount of natural gas you have used in that billing period. Multiplying that amount by the charge per THERM in the proper rate schedule will give you the amount you pay for the natural gas used. In addition to the above amount, a purchased gas adjustment, customer charge and taxes are applied to complete your bill.

METER READING

Your meter is read on approximately the same date each month (with some variation allowed for weekends and holidays). Your monthly bill reflects the amount of electricity or natural gas used since your last meter reading.



South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
WEEKLY FILINGS
For the Period of May 27, 1999 through June 2, 1999

If you need a complete copy of a filing faxed, overnight expressed, or mailed to you, please contact
Delaine Kolbo within five business days of this filing.
Phone: 605-773-3705 Fax: 605-773-3809

CONSUMER COMPLAINT

CT99-006 In the Matter of the Complaint filed by Nancy Manning and Elizabeth Frederick, Rapid City, South Dakota, against U S WEST Communications, Inc. and McLeodUSA Telecommunications Services, Inc. Regarding the Inability to Provide Service

On May 27, 1999, the Commission received a complaint from Nancy Manning and Elizabeth Frederick, Rapid City, South Dakota, against U S West Communications, Inc. and McLeodUSA Telecommunications Services, Inc. regarding the inability to provide service. The complainants are asking for immediate phone service, reimbursement for expenses, reimbursement for loss of business, an independent contractor allowed to enter USWC, and an explanation concerning discriminatory treatment.

Consumer Affairs: Leni Healy
Legal Intern: Jeff Koerselman
Date Filed: 05/27/99

ELECTRIC

EL99-011 In the Matter of the Filing by Montana-Dakota Utilities Co. for Approval of Revised Power Purchase Tariffs Rates 95, 96 and 97

Application by Montana-Dakota Utilities Company to revise power purchase rate schedules 95, 96 and 97 in compliance with the Commission's Order in Docket F-3365 which dictated annual review and if necessary, revision of these rates based on updated information. The rates filed apply to the purchase of power from cogeneration or small power production facilities of customers. No customers are currently served by these rates in South Dakota.

Staff Analyst: Dave Jacobson
Staff Attorney: Camron Hoseck
Date Filed: 06/01/99
Intervention Deadline: NA

GAS AND ELECTRIC

GE99-004 In the Matter of the Filing by Northwestern Public Service for Approval of Revised Customer Information Handbook

On June 1, 1999, Northwestern Public Service filed a docket requesting review and approval pursuant to Administrative Rule 20:10:16:02 for their new Customer Handbook.

Staff Analyst: Michele Farris
Staff Attorney: Karen Cremer
Date Filed: 06/01/99
Intervention Date: 06/18/99

NATURAL GAS

NG99-002 In the Matter of the Application of Northwestern Public Service for Authority to Increase Rates for Natural Gas Service

On June 1, 1999, the Commission received an application from NorthWestern Public Service, a division of Northwestern Corporation, for an increase in rates for natural gas service in South Dakota. The Company has requested that the proposed increase of \$2,108,112 or approximately 6.3% become effective July 1, 1999.

Staff Analyst: Bob Knadle
Staff Attorney: Karen Cremer
Date Filed: 06/01/99
Intervention Deadline: To be determined by Commission Order

You may receive this listing and other PUC publications via our website or via internet e-mail.
You may subscribe or unsubscribe to the PUC mailing lists at <http://www.state.sd.us/puc/>



DE 99-004

600 Market Street West
Huron, SD 57350-1500
Telephone: 605-352-8411
Facsimile: 605-353-7631
Internet: www.northwestern.com
Russell C. Molstad, Jr.
Corporate Attorney
Telephone: 605-353-7564
Facsimile: 605-353-7319
rmolstad@northwestern.com

July 23, 1999

RECEIVED

JUL 26 1999

SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

Ms. Michelle Ferris
S.D. Public Utilities Commission
State Capitol Building
500 E Capitol Ave
Pierre SD 57501-5070

Re: NorthWestern Customer Handbook

Dear Michelle,

I wanted to let you know that eight copies of the revised customer handbook are being sent directly from the printer by Federal Express to the Public Utilities Commission to your attention. They should arrive Monday afternoon. If you have any questions or comments prior to the 1:30 meeting on Tuesday, I would appreciate you giving me a call. I would also be glad to answer any questions that any of the other Staff might have if you could find those out in advance.

You will note that we have added the guarantor section as a means of establishing credit. We have also allocated in our NorthWestern Corporation cost center a percent of the cost of the handbook to allow for the information concerning purchase of NorthWestern stock.

Again, if you have any questions or comments, please give me a call prior to the meeting. Thank you very much for your assistance and cooperation.

Have a Super Fantastic Day!

Sincerely yours,

Russell C. Molstad, Jr.
Corporate Attorney

ss
cc: Warren Lotsberg
Kim Thompson-Rieger

CONTINUATION

3 -

America's Best Service Experience

New Customer Handbook

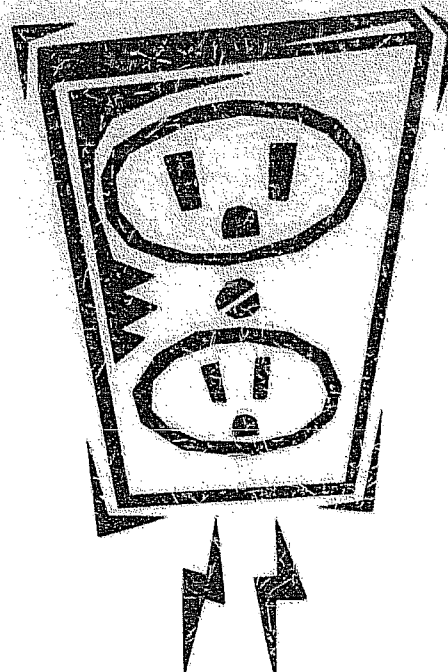


NorthWestern
PUBLIC SERVICE

NorthWesternTM
PUBLIC SERVICE

except for customers using the Early Pay option to establish credit. This time frame will be waived in cases of fraud, illegal use, or when it is clearly indicated that the customer is preparing to leave. If your bill becomes delinquent, NorthWestern will provide written notice giving you an additional 10 days in which to pay the bill to avoid disconnection.

3. If this is your first disconnection notice, NorthWestern will attempt to notify you by telephone, personal visit, or certified mail and provide you the information about your right to appeal to the PUC.
4. If you have been unwilling to pay the bill in full or enter into a reasonable agreement, service will be disconnected.
5. No disconnection will be made if a bona fide or just dispute concerning the bill exists. A bona fide dispute is defined by your paying the undisputed portion of the bill and contacting the PUC within the required time frame.
6. Residential disconnection may be postponed for one 30-day period by presenting a physician's certificate stating that disconnection would aggravate an existing medical emergency.
7. Residential disconnection will not be made from November 1 to March 31 without adding 30 days to the time periods described in item #2.
8. Service will not be disconnected on any Friday, Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday or at any time when NorthWestern's business offices are not open to the public.
9. If you receive both gas and electric service, you may have payments applied to either portion in order to avoid disconnection of that service.
10. In a landlord-tenant situation, where the service is in the landlord's name, NorthWestern will not disconnect the service until the tenant has been offered the service in their name.



**Creating
America's
Best Service
Experience™**

Ways to serve you

2

How you are billed

3

About your bill

4

Payment options

5

Understanding your bill

6-9

Your rights as a customer

10-12

COMMENTS WELCOME

NorthWestern wants you to be satisfied with your electric and natural gas service. We understand that sometimes a question, misunderstanding or complaint may develop. And, we want to hear about it! Our team members are trained to help you. Just call or stop by your local office. We will make a full and prompt investigation of all feedback received. Please address any written complaints to:

NorthWestern Customer Advocate
600 Market Street
Huron, SD 57350
E-mail: advocate@northwestern.com

IN CASE OF A DISPUTE

Whenever you advise NorthWestern before the disconnection of service of any part of the billing, charges, or service in dispute, NorthWestern will:

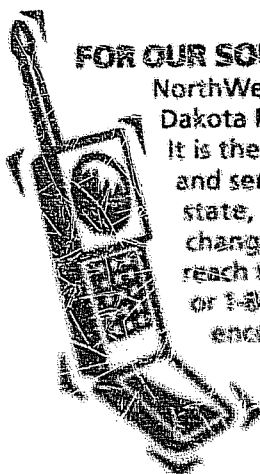
1. Investigate the dispute promptly;
2. Advise you of the investigation and its result;
3. Attempt to resolve the dispute; and
4. Withhold disconnection of service during such investigation, provided that you pay the undisputed portion of your bill.

If the dispute is not resolved, South Dakota customers have the option of appealing to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) within 10 working days after the disconnection notice was sent.

FOR OUR SOUTH DAKOTA CUSTOMERS

NorthWestern is regulated by the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (PUC). It is the PUC's duty to oversee the rates and services of all public utilities in the state, including approval of all rate changes. South Dakota customers may reach the PUC by calling (605) 773-3201 or 1-800-332-1782. Written correspondence should be directed to:

South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
500 East Capitol
Pierre, SD 57501



Once a month you receive a bill from NorthWestern for the electricity and/or natural gas you have used the previous month. The bill you receive is based upon a meter reading or estimated energy use in the event your meter cannot be read. Your bill is figured according to rates that have been approved by the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission or that are filed with the city.

CALCULATING YOUR ELECTRIC USAGE...

Electricity is measured and sold by kilowatt hour (KWH). A KWH represents the amount of electricity required to operate a 100 watt bulb for 10 hours. Your bill shows the present and previous readings of your electric meter. Subtracting the smaller figure from the larger figure will give you the amount of electricity you have used measured in KWH.

Your KWH consumed multiplied by the charge per KWH in the proper rate schedule will result in the amount you will pay for the electricity you have used. In addition to the above amount, an electric fuel purchased power adjustment, a customer charge, and taxes make up your complete monthly bill.

CALCULATING YOUR NATURAL GAS USAGE...

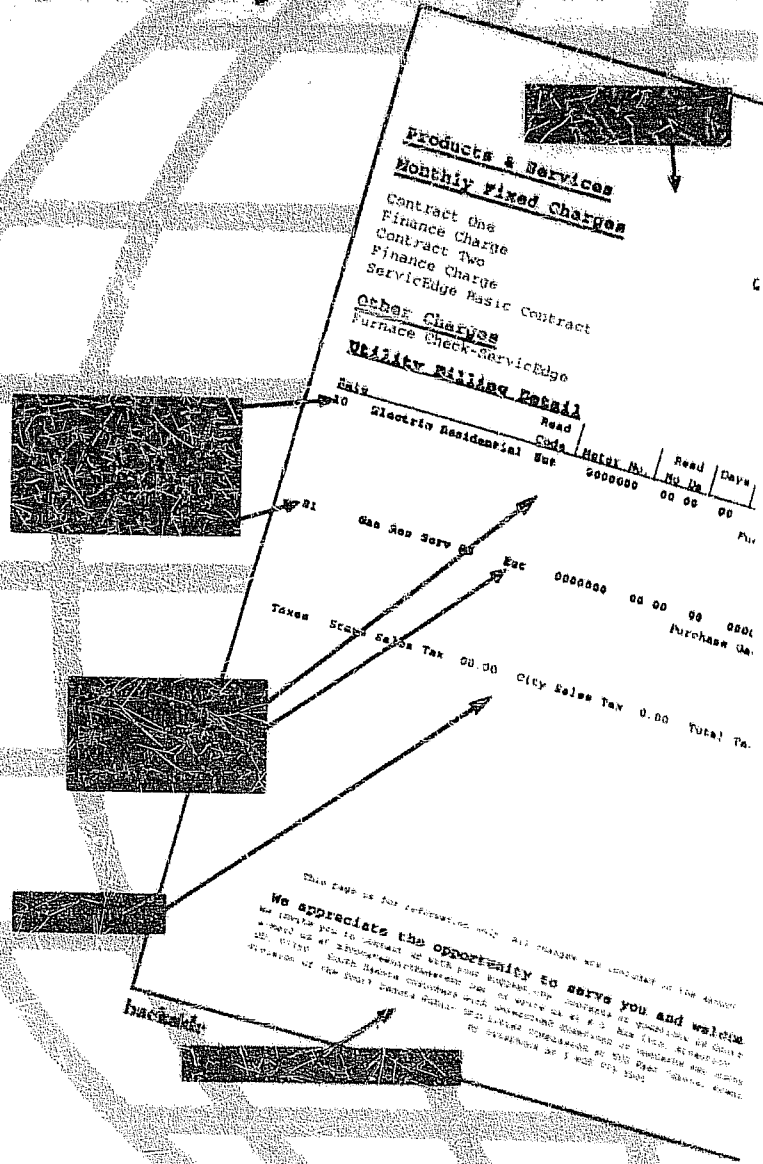
Natural gas is measured and sold by THERMS. A therm is a unit of heating equal to 100,000 BTU (British Thermal Units). Again, your bill shows the current and previous meter readings. Subtracting the previous meter reading from the current reading will give you the amount of natural gas you have used in that billing period. Multiplying that amount by the charge per THERM in the proper rate schedule will give you the amount you pay for the natural gas used. In addition to the above amount, a purchase gas commodity, customer charge and taxes are applied to complete your bill.

METER READING

Your meter is read on approximately the same date each month (with some variation allowed for weekends and holidays). Your monthly bill reflects the amount of electricity or natural gas used since your last meter reading.



How to read the detailed portion of your bill



NorthWestern offers the following options in lieu of a deposit:

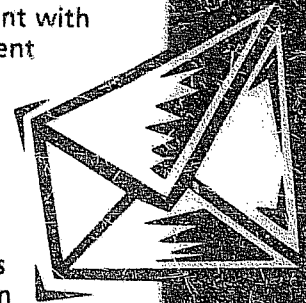
- X Early Pay** - this option allows you to pay your NorthWestern bill within 10 days after you receive it while you establish credit.
- X Reference Letter** - by simply providing a letter of reference from your previous energy provider, you automatically establish credit with NorthWestern.
- X Guarantor** - new residential customers with no NorthWestern credit history can establish credit by providing a third party guarantor who assumes responsibility for the account.

PAYING YOUR BILL

You may pay your bill by mail. A send and return envelope is included with your bill for this purpose. Send the part of your bill that is marked "Return this portion of the bill with your payment." along with your check or money order. You may also pay your bill personally at your local NorthWestern office. For faster processing, please bring your statement with you. Some communities also have convenient drop boxes. Ask your local office for locations.

To make paying your bill even more convenient, NorthWestern offers the following options:

- X Budget Payment Plan** - this option allows you to pay an equal amount each month on your NorthWestern bill. Since your usage is typically higher in the colder winter months, your bills are generally higher. By spreading the payments throughout a twelve month period, you can budget your energy expenses and avoid high winter bills.
- X Easy Bank Pay** - this option allows you to have your monthly payment automatically withdrawn from your checking, savings or credit card account on the day of your choice.
- X Credit Card Payment** - now you can pay your NorthWestern bill using your VISA, MasterCard or Discover card. Simply call our 24-hour Customer Service Center anytime you decide to pay your bill by credit card, and we'll take care of the rest.



BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

IN THE MATTER OF THE FILING BY)
NORTHWESTERN PUBLIC SERVICE FOR)
APPROVAL OF REVISED CUSTOMER)
INFORMATION HANDBOOK)
ORDER APPROVING)
REVISED CUSTOMER)
INFORMATION HANDBOOK)
GE99-004

On June 1, 1999, the Public Utilities Commission (Commission) received a filing from NorthWestern Public Service (NWPS) requesting approval of revised customer information handbooks distributed to new customers.

Pursuant to ARSD 20:10:16:02, a utility must submit a copy of customer information to the Commission for approval before it can be distributed.

NWPS proposed to completely revise its former information handbook. The new handbook was created with several changes made to make information easier for customers to understand. The matter was originally considered at the July 13, 1999, Commission meeting. At that time several changes were suggested and the matter was deferred.

At a duly noticed meeting of July 29, 1999, the Commission considered approval of the new handbook. Following NWPS' compliance with the proposed revisions, Commission Staff recommended approval.

The Commission has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to SDCL 49-34A-4, 49-34A-6, 49-34A-8, 49-34A-10, 49-34A-11, and ARSD 20:10:16:02. The Commission voted unanimously to approve the new handbook. It is therefore

ORDERED, that NWPS' above mentioned revisions to its customer information handbooks are hereby approved and shall be effective on the date of this order.

Dated at Pierre, South Dakota, this 6th day of August, 1999.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that this document has been served today upon all parties of record in this docket, as listed on the docket service list, by facsimile or by first class mail, in properly addressed envelopes, with charges prepaid thereon.

By: Debra Kalkbrenner

Date: 8/6/99

(OFFICIAL SEAL)

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

James A. Burg
JAMES A. BURG, Chairman

Pam Nelson
PAM NELSON, Commissioner

Laska Schoenfelder
LASKA SCHÖENFELDER, Commissioner