

# Consumer Rights and Responsibilities

## Intro

As a customer of a regulated, public utility, you have certain rights and responsibilities. Your rights as a customer include:

- Receiving safe and adequate service at just and reasonable rates;
- Receiving and having access to the information needed to understand how your bill is calculated;
- Being able to request a test of the meter that measures your usage;
- Receiving information about rate changes, medical emergency protection and financial assistance;
- Establishing a reasonable payment arrangement for any overdue balance;
- During the winter, paying an overdue balance over a longer period of time.

Your responsibilities as a customer include:

- To pay your bill in full and on time each month;
- To make an arrangement with the utility to pay balances owed over

a period of time when you are unable to pay your bill in full each month.

## Who Is The NHDOE

The NHDOE is a state agency that promotes and coordinates energy policy and programs in the New Hampshire. To learn more about the NHDOE, please visit the NHDOE's website at [www.energy.nh.gov](http://www.energy.nh.gov)

The NHDOE's Consumer Services Division receives and responds to complaints and inquiries about public utility services and rates.

## Who Is The NHPUC

The NHPUC is a state agency that regulates the rates charged, and services provided, by public utilities. To learn more about the NHPUC and the utilities it regulates, please visit the NHPUC's website [www.puc.nh.gov](http://www.puc.nh.gov)

## Electric Utilities

There are three electric utilities regulated by the NHDOE and the NHPUC: Eversource Energy, Liberty Utilities (Granite State Electric), and Unitil Energy

Systems. While the NHPUC does not regulate the rates charged by the New Hampshire Electric Cooperative, the NHDOE regulates practices related to service disconnection.

Municipal electric utilities are not public utilities and not regulated by the NHDOE or the NHPUC.

## Competitive Electric Power Suppliers

During the 1990s, the New Hampshire Legislature took steps to provide electric supply choices to electric customers. It took some time, however, for a competitive electric energy supply market to develop, with options for larger commercial and industrial consumers occurring sooner than those for smaller commercial and residential customers. Today, there are many companies, called competitive energy suppliers, registered to supply energy to your home or business. The Department's website lists all the [competitive energy suppliers](#) doing business in New Hampshire. A [comparison](#) of the products and prices offered by competitive energy suppliers is also available.

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Your electric bill consists of two parts – delivery service and energy supply. Delivery service is the poles and wires that bring electricity to your home or business. Your electric utility (also known as the electric distribution company) delivers electricity to all customers within its defined service area. The energy supply portion of your bill is for the electricity you use in your home or business. Who supplies that energy is up to you, the customer. You may continue to buy your energy from your electric utility or you may choose to buy your energy from a competitive energy supplier.



If you decide to choose a competitive energy supplier, you will still be a customer of your electric utility for the delivery of electricity to your home or business. The utility will still be responsible for restoring power if there is an outage. What will be different is that you will now also be a customer of a competitive energy supplier for the actual electricity that you use in your home or business. You may receive one bill, sometimes called consolidated billing, from your electric utility for both the delivery and the energy. Or you may receive two bills – one from your electric utility for the delivery of the electricity and the other from the competitive energy supplier for the electricity you used. Everyone's bill is different, but as a general rule of thumb, about half of the total bill is for delivery and the rest is for the electricity you use.

Remember, regardless of who you buy your electricity from, you will continue to call your electric utility for outages, emergency services and questions about your service.

## New Utility Service

Customers moving to a new home should call the utility to make arrangements for new service. While new service may usually be set up over the phone, your utility may require a written application. Provided utility service is in place at your new home already, your utility company should turn the service on for you within 3 business days.



If no utility service is in place at your new home, your utility will charge you to extend service to your new home. You can find the cost for constructing new service in the utility's tariff.

Your utility may ask you for a security deposit when you set up new utility service if you owe them money for

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service provided at another location or if you are renting and are unable to provide a copy of a 12-month lease. Your utility company may also request a security deposit if it has obtained a judgement against you due to non-payment or if you have interfered with, or diverted service, provided to you at a prior location anytime within the prior 3 years.

### Power Outages

If your power goes out, be sure to report it to your electric utility.

### Your Utility Bill

Your utility bill should include all information needed for you to understand how the charges are calculated.

If you have questions about an item on your bill or think your recorded usage is too high or low, you should contact your utility immediately.

Utilities maintain tariffs, which contain the rates for the service provided to you as well as other terms and conditions of service. Utility tariffs are available on

your utility's website and also on the NHPUC website, [Regulated Utility Tariffs](#)

### Paying Your Bill

Payment in full is required by the due date on the bill. Your utility may offer many different options for paying your bill. Please contact your utility or visit your utility's website for information about the various payment options. If you cannot pay the full amount due, contact your utility to set up a payment arrangement.



During the winter months, the payment arrangement offered to you will allow for repayment over a longer period, up to 12 months.

If you do not pay your bill in full by the due date and do not contact your utility

to set up an arrangement for payment, you will be charged a fee for a late payment. Late payment charges are generally between 1% and 1.5% of the amount due.

### Service Disconnection

Your utility service may be disconnected if you do not pay your bill or if you refuse to allow your utility to access the meter. Before your service can be disconnected, your utility must send you a notice telling you why and the date on or after which the disconnection will take place. The notice will also tell you what you need to do to prevent the disconnection from occurring. The notice will be mailed to you no less than 14 days prior to the scheduled disconnection date.

Although there are additional protections from service disconnection during the winter and for customers with medical certifications, your service can still be disconnected if you do not set up a payment arrangement with your utility.

Your service may also be disconnected for safety reasons, including but not limited to tampering with your meter.

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When disconnection results from a safety reason, your utility is not required to provide notice to you in advance of the disconnection.

### Service Reconnection

If your service is disconnected, there may be a fee to have it turned back on.

### Medical Emergencies

If you have a medical condition that requires utility service for treatment, please contact your doctor and ask for a medical emergency certification for your utility service. Your utility can provide you with the form the doctor must complete as well as information about an online portal (when available) where your doctor can provide the certification electronically.



If you have a medical emergency certification, you must still pay your bill in full each month. If you are unable to do so, please contact your utility to set up a payment arrangement. Flexible arrangements for payment of outstanding balances are available.

### Help Paying Your Bill

Social service organizations, including municipal welfare and the community action agencies, provide financial assistance to eligible customers having difficulty paying utility bills.

Your utility company can provide with the names of those organizations known to them and who provide assistance in your community.

### Service Termination

To terminate service, a customer must provide at least four days' notice to the utility.

A customer is responsible for the charges associated with their account until service is terminated or the notice period ends.

A complete set of the Department's rules governing the relationship between you and your utility is available on the State of New Hampshire website - [1200 rules](#)

### Still Need Help? File A Complaint

The Department's Consumer Services Division receives and responds to complaints and inquiries about public utility services and rates. To get help, please contact us:

- By phone - (603) 271-3670 or (800) 852-3793
- By email – [consumerservices@energy.nh.gov](mailto:consumerservices@energy.nh.gov)
- By mail – 21 South Fruit Street, Suite 10, Concord, NH 03301

To learn more, please visit - [Consumer Information](#).