

Sec. 8-2014. - Residential Customer Disputes

(a) At any time before the date of termination of utility service for nonpayment of the amount(s) shown on a utility bill, a notice of rejection or a notice of termination, a residential customer may dispute the correctness of all or part of the amount(s) shown in accordance with the provisions of this article. A residential customer shall not be entitled to dispute the correctness of all or part of the amount(s) if all or part of the amount(s) was (were) the subject of a previous dispute under this section. (b) The procedure for residential customer disputes shall be as follows:

(1) Before the date of termination, the residential customer shall notify Customer Care, orally or in writing, which he disputes all or part of the amount(s) shown on a utility bill, a notice of rejection or a notice of termination, stating as completely as possible the basis for the dispute.

(2) If Customer Care determines that the present dispute is untimely or that the residential customer previously disputed the correctness of all or part of the amount(s) shown, Customer Care department shall mail to the customer a notice stating that the present dispute is untimely or invalid. Customer Care shall then proceed as if the customer had not notified the utility of the present dispute.

(3) If Customer Care determines that the present dispute is not untimely or invalid under this section, Customer Care, within three (3) days after receipt of the customer's notice, shall arrange an informal meeting between the residential customer and Customer Care.

(4) Based on the utility's records, the customer's allegations and all other relevant materials available to the official, Customer Care shall resolve the dispute, attempting to do so in a manner satisfactory to both.

(5) Within five (5) days of completion of the meeting, Customer Care shall mail to the customer a copy of his decision resolving the dispute, unless at the time of the hearing the customer is notified in writing of the decision.

(6) If the decision is unsatisfactory to the customer, the customer, within three (3) business days of his receipt of the official's decision, may request, in writing, a formal hearing before Customer Care.

(7) The formal hearing before Customer Care shall be held within ten (10) days of the utility's receipt of the customer's written request.

(8) At the hearing, Customer Care and the customer shall be entitled to present all evidence that is, in Customer Care's view, relevant and material to the dispute and to examine and cross-examine witnesses.

(9) Based on the record established at the hearing, Customer Care, within five (5) days of the completion of the hearing, shall issue a written decision formally resolving the dispute and it shall be final and binding on the utility and the customer.

(c) Utilization of this dispute procedure shall not relieve a residential customer of his obligation to timely and completely pay all other undisputed utility charges and/or installments and surcharges, and the undisputed portion(s) of the amount(s) which is (are) the subject of the present dispute. Failure to timely and completely pay all such undisputed amounts shall subject the customer to termination of utility service in accordance with the provisions of this article.

(d) Until the date of the hearing with Customer Care, the customer must make full payment of the disputed amount unless, after a determination of good cause by Customer Care, it is proper for the customer to suspend payment until the hearings are complete.

(Ord. No. 007-13, 3-18-13)