

## **NOTICE TO CUSTOMERS**

The following regulations have been adopted to deal with the rights of customers whose gas service is subject to termination. These regulations require the Company to furnish customers with a brief explanation of their rights under the regulations. The following notice contains a brief explanation of these customer rights. If you have a question about this explanation or about the regulations, you may contact a customer representative of the Company at 800-659-8299, or the DPUC toll-free number, 800-382-4586.

### **HARDSHIP CASES AND AMORTIZATION AGREEMENTS**

Starting November 1 and ending May 1, when a legitimate hardship exists with a residential customer, the Gas Company will not shut off or refuse to turn on gas service. A legitimate hardship exists when a customer:

- Is receiving local, state or federal public assistance.
- Has Social Security, veteran's or unemployment compensation as his/her sole source of income.
- Is an unemployed head of a household.
- Is seriously ill or any resident of a customer's house is seriously ill.
- Has income falling below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines.
- Would be deprived of the necessities of life if payment of a delinquent account is required. Necessities of life are defined as things without which survival would be endangered including, but not limited to, food, clothing, shelter, medical expenses and heat.

All residential customers subject to shut-off for non-payment will be offered fair and reasonable payment arrangements on the unpaid back balance.

### **RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER RIGHTS**

- If there is a dispute over a hardship claim, the Company will refer the customer to a Company Review Officer.
- If a residential customer disputes a payment arrangement, the Company will refer the customer to a Company Review Officer.
- If a residential customer disagrees with the written decision of the Review Officer, the customer has the right to appeal the decision to the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) for an informal investigation.
- If the DPUC is unable to settle the dispute to the satisfaction of both the customer and the Company, both the Company and the customer have the right to request a formal hearing before a DPUC Hearing Officer.

During the time in which a customer is appealing a payment arrangement or a denial of hardship status, gas service will not be shutoff.

### **REVIEW OF DISPUTED ACCOUNTS**

If you notify the Company of any complaint about your billing or service, gas service will not be terminated (unless a hazard exists) until the dispute is resolved. However, you must pay any undisputed bill or portion of the bill while the complaint is being reviewed. You should first tell the company you have a complaint and the reason for your complaint. After the Company answers the complaint, and if you are not satisfied, you have seven (7) days to request that the dispute be referred to a Company Review Officer for further review. If no such request is received, gas service may be terminated without further notice. After the Review Officer issues a decision, if you are still dissatisfied, you may appeal the Review Officer's decision to the DPUC. Such an appeal must be filed with the DPUC within 10 days after the Review Officer's decision is mailed or delivered to you. The DPUC will investigate the matter and, if it is not resolved, you or the Company may seek a formal hearing before the DPUC. If a customer fails to request a further review or appeal a dispute within the time limitations described, gas service may be terminated without further notice.

### **SERIOUS ILLNESS**

If you receive a notice of termination of gas service and there is a resident in your home who is seriously ill, the gas service will not be terminated during such serious illness. You must provide the Company with a certification of the serious illness indicating how long the illness is expected to continue. A telephone notification from a registered physician will be satisfactory if followed up by a written certification from a physician within seven (7) days after the telephone certification. If the physician does not specify the expected length of the illness, the certification must be renewed every 15 days. Except in hardship cases from November 1 to May 1, gas service will be continued under a serious illness certificate only so long as the account is kept current and you enter into a reasonable amortization agreement on any past-due bills and live up to that agreement. Either you or the Company may dispute the validity of a serious illness certificate with the DPUC as described above. Gas service will not, however, be terminated until the dispute is resolved.

### **THIRD-PARTY NOTIFICATION**

You may request that a third party be notified of any threatened termination of gas service. Such a third party will not become liable for your bill unless the third party makes a separate arrangement with the Company.

### **TERMINATION OF SERVICE TO TENANTS**

Gas service to tenants and to other persons who are not customers or members of a customer's household is subject to special regulations. These regulations do not apply to you unless you have tenants or others living in your dwelling who are not members of your household, but who are served by your gas meter. If the gas service is subject to termination and the Company is aware that the gas is being used by persons other than a customer or members of a customer's household, such as tenants, service will not be terminated until such other persons are notified of the threatened termination and given an opportunity to take over the gas service in their own names. If the tenant or other persons take over gas service in their own names, no security deposit will be required, and they will not be required to pay past bills. If it is not feasible for the Company to put gas service in the names of tenants or other individuals, for example, where there is one meter serving several apartments or where gas is being used for a central heating system, service will not be terminated, but the company may apply to the Superior Court for the appointment of a receiver to collect all rents or similar payments from tenants or others receiving the benefit of the gas service and apply the sums collected to the customer's gas bill and the costs of the receivership.