

TEXAS POWER PAGES

TEXAS ELECTRIC CHOICE

Understanding Disconnection for Non-Payment

Since September 2002, residential and small commercial customers of competitive Retail Electric Providers will not be switched to the Provider of Last Resort because of non-payment. Instead, they will be switched to the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider and be charged the Price-to-Beat rate, which is lower than previous Provider of Last Resort rates. The Affiliate Retail Electric Provider is the Retail Electric Provider that was part of the original electric company that generated and sold electricity in your area. Now, the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider only sells electricity and provides customer service. Customers already served by the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider are subject to disconnection 10 days after receiving a non-payment notice. They will no longer be switched to the Provider of Last Resort. The Provider of Last Resort now serves only as a "back-up" electric provider in the event a Retail Electric Provider leaves the market for any reason.

A residential customer who was with the Provider of Last Resort must have made an affirmative decision by November 1, 2002 to return to the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider at the Price-to-Beat rate or have chosen a Competitive Retail Electric Provider. A Competitive Retail Electric Provider is a new electric provider to your area. If you are a current Provider of Last Resort customer and made no affirmative decision, the Provider of Last Resort may continue to serve you through a competitive affiliate at an unregulated rate.

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE CONTRACT WITH MY RETAIL ELECTRIC PROVIDER IS TERMINATED?

- You will receive a termination notice from your Retail Electric Provider, giving you 10 days to pay the entire bill or make payment arrangements.
- If your current provider is a Competitive Retail Electric Provider, on the 11th day, if you have not paid the bill or made arrangements to pay the bill, you will be transferred to the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider at the Price-to-Beat rate.

- You will likely be required to pay two months deposit and any past due amounts you owe the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider (if you were a previous customer).
- If you are already a customer of the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider, on the 11th day, if you have not paid your bill or made payment arrangements your power will be shut-off.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR POWER IS TURNED OFF:

- Contact the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider, and meet the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider's requirements for return of service, such as paying the amount due in full or making payment arrangements acceptable to the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider.
- Contact a Competitive Retail Electric Provider to receive electric service, most likely a Competitive Retail Electric Provider will require a credit check and two months deposit to begin service.
- If necessary, contact a social service agency for help with deposit requirements.

TIPS TO AVOID DISCONNECTION:

1. Pay your bill on time.
2. Check with your Retail Electric Provider to see if you qualify for a low-income discount.
3. Explore average payment plans that allow you to pay approximately the same amount for your electric service each month.
4. Ask your Retail Electric Provider about deferred payment plans and/or bill payment assistance funds.
5. Contact your Retail Electric Provider about making payment arrangements before your contract is terminated.

March 10, 2003

ASSISTANCE FROM THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Questions: **Call:** 1-866-797-4839 (TTY 1-877-864-4725)

Visit: www.powertochoose.org

Complaints: **Write:** PUC – Customer Protection Division P.O. Box 13326 Austin, TX 78711-3326

Call: 1-888-782-8477 (TTY 1-800-735-2988)

Email: customer@puc.state.tx.us

