

RESIDENTIAL UTILITY CUSTOMER PROTECTIONS

(Effective March 13, 2023)

Established by the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (BPU)

If you have questions about these consumer protections, you should contact your utility company at the number on your bill. If you have a complaint about your utility company or if your services are in jeopardy of being shut off, you should call the BPU at 800-624-0241 for assistance. Note: The BPU regulates only investor owned utility companies.

1. You have the right to utility service if you are a qualified applicant.
2. You are not required to pay an unreasonable deposit amount in order to receive utility service.
3. You have the right to budget billing if you are a utility customer. This is a plan that allows you to pay a set amount for a set period of time. **[This does not apply to telecommunications providers such as Verizon.]**
4. You have the right to at least one “deferred payment plan” per year with your utility company if you have an outstanding bill you cannot pay.
5. You have the right to dispute a charge on your utility bill with the utility company. As long as you pay the amount not in dispute, your utility service may not be turned off while the utility company investigates the disputed charge.
6. You have the right to have your meter tested free of charge once every 12 months if you think it is not working properly. You may request a BPU employee be present when the utility company is doing the test. **[This does not apply to telecommunications providers such as Verizon.]**
7. You have the right to at least 10 days written notice from your utility company before your utility service may be turned off for non-payment. Your service may be turned off after that time if you do not make a reasonable payment toward what you owe or if you do not agree to a payment plan with your utility company.
8. You have a right to reasonable advance notice from the utility company before your service can be suspended or turned off for reasons other than non-payment.
9. Unless there is a safety-related emergency, a utility company may not suspend or turn off utility service outside the hours of 8:00am through 4:00pm., Monday through Thursday.
10. Unless there is a safety-related emergency, a utility company may not suspend or turn off utility service on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or a New Jersey State holiday absent such emergency.

11. If you are an electric, gas, or water/wastewater customer eligible for protection under the Winter Termination Program, you have the right to utility services from November 15 to March 15. You must notify your utility company of your eligibility under this program. **[Telecommunications customers are not eligible for this program.]**
12. If you live in a multi-family dwelling unit, you have the right to receive notice if the utility company plans on turning off service to the building. The utility company must either post a notice in a common area and/or send the notice to you as an occupant of the dwelling.
13. If the amount of electricity, gas, water, or wastewater shown on your utility bill appears unreasonably high or suspicious, you have the right to have the utility company perform a “diversion of service” investigation on your behalf. **[This does not apply to telecommunications providers such as Verizon.]**
14. You have the right to continue receiving utility service as long as you pay the charges for the utility service you received. A utility company may not send you a notice threatening to turn off your utility service based on extra charges.
15. You have the right to have your deposit returned to you once you close your account and the final bill is settled. The utility company must give you the option of having a deposit refund applied to your account as a credit or having the deposit refunded by separate check.
16. You should not be assessed a late payment charge on your residential customer utility bill. **[This does not apply to telecommunications providers such as Verizon. See NJSA 48:3-2.]**