

COVID-19: What Washington Gas Customers Should Know

Governor Hogan declared a State of Emergency for Maryland on March 5, 2020. On March 16, he announced an Executive Order prohibiting the termination of public services. These include electric, gas, water and sewage services, as well as phone, cable, and internet services. The Order also prohibits the collection of late fees during this time.

1. I have a pending Washington Gas service termination notice. Will my gas be shut-off?

Your service will not be shut off during the State of Emergency except in hazardous or theft-of-service situations. We do not know if the moratorium will continue after the Governor lifts the State of Emergency. You should still make every effort to pay your bill. Once the suspension is lifted, you will be responsible for the full amount.

OPC strongly recommends that you contact Washington Gas to work out a payment plan. Washington Gas will be working with customers on a case-by-case basis to establish payment arrangements and identify energy assistance options. You can call the Washington Gas Customer Service line at 844-927-4427 Mon-Fri, 8AM-9PM; Sat, 8AM-4:30PM to discuss payment arrangements. Let them know of any layoff or reduced income as a result of the State of Emergency.

If you are concerned about your ability to pay your bill, there may be resources to help. Please contact us at DLInfo_OPC@maryland.gov or review our resource guides at www.opc.maryland.gov to learn about different programs that might be able to assist you in getting back on track with your utility bill.

2. If I can't make a payment right now, will I get a late fee added to my bill?

You will not incur any late fees during the State of Emergency. We do not know if the moratorium will continue after the Governor lifts the State of Emergency.

3. What can I do if my gas service is off right now?

Your gas service will not automatically be restored during the State of Emergency unless continuation of the termination will aggravate an existing serious illness or prevent the use of life-support equipment of any occupant of the premises. You must provide certification of a serious illness or the need for life-support equipment by a licensed physician, a certified nurse practitioner, or a physician assistant. If you need assistance with this process contact OPC to discuss your situation. If your services are off right now, OPC recommends that you contact Washington Gas to work out a payment plan. Washington Gas will be working with customers on a case-by-case basis to establish payment arrangements and identify energy assistance options. You can call the Washington Gas Customer Service line at 844-927-4427 Mon-Fri, 8AM-9PM; Sat, 8AM-4:30PM to discuss payment arrangements.

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There may be other resources to help. Please contact us at DLInfo_OPC@maryland.gov or review our resource guides at www.opc.maryland.gov to learn about different programs that might be able to assist you.

4. What if someone in my household is critically ill or relies on Washington Gas services for life support. What can I do to get service back on?

If someone in your home is critically ill and relies on Washington Gas service for life support you should immediately contact Washington Gas to discuss options. There may be options for your household. If you have a limited income and are receiving services at a hospital or medical facility, you should find out if there is a certified "Navigator" who can assist you with your utility service problem, or contact OPC for more information.

5. What if I need to start or stop my utility service, report an outage, or report an issue?

If you need to access any of Washington Gas's services, you can call 844-927-4427 Mon-Fri, 8AM-9PM; Sat, 8AM-4:30PM or go online at www.washingtongas.com.

6. Can I still make payments on my utility account?

Yes. While there are suspensions on non-payment service terminations you can still make payments to your account. You can mail, call in, or go online if you want to make a payment on your account. You can still go to some locations to pay in person, but because of the rapidly changing situation this option is not guaranteed. Due to the changing situation, the Washington Gas walk-in locations are closed. OPC recommends that you continue to make payments, even if partial payments, even though your utility services cannot be terminated.

7. What if I receive a termination notice during the State of Emergency?

While the termination of service notice is real, a technician will not initiate a disconnection during the State of Emergency. Make every effort to make payments on your bill and to work with Washington Gas on a possible payment arrangement.

8. I have contacted my utility about working out a payment plan and they have not assisted me. What do I do now?

Remember: Your utility cannot turn off your service during the State of Emergency. However, you will be subject to a turn-off if you are behind on your bill after the State of Emergency is lifted by the Governor. It is a good idea to be proactive in managing your bill during the emergency. If your utility will not agree to assist you, you can submit a complaint to the Consumer Assistance Division of the Public Service Commission (PSC/CAD). Due to the limitations on public agencies, you will need to submit the complaint online at www.psc.state.md.us. If you are not able to fill out the form online, contact OPC at 410-767-8150 and leave a message with your name and phone # and state the problem, and someone will

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contact you to assist you. Please look at the OPC Information Sheet "COVID-19 State of Emergency: Instructions for Requesting a Utility Bill Payment Extension or Alternate Payment Plan" to assist you in making the request.