Maryland Office of People’s Counsel

Termination Notices to Occupants – Master-Metered Buildings

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has adopted new regulations for termination notices to occupants of master-metered buildings. “Occupants” refers to any individual who has a legal right to reside in the premises. The new regulations will provide better and more detailed notice of a utility service shut-off to the occupants, so that they can take steps to protect themselves.

A master-metered building has four or more dwelling units, and the gas or electricity is provided to the occupants as part of a rental agreement, lease, condominium fee or other charge. The new regulations do not apply to transient facilities.

The utility must notify all occupants of a master-metered building of a pending service termination by:

- 1st class mail postmarked 14 days before the service shut-off, if the utility has the postal address readily available, OR
- Flyers or “door stuffers” at least 14 days before the service shut-off, AND
- Posting termination notices in conspicuous locations in the building (for example, near mailboxes, entrances and exits)

Notice to Government Agencies: The utility must provide notice 14 days before service termination to the PSC, Office of People’s Counsel (“OPC”), Office of the Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division and the Director of the local Department of Social Services.

The utility may seek a waiver of the notice requirement by filing a written request with the PSC, but cannot proceed without PSC approval of the waiver. The utility must also provide copies of the request and related documentation to the PSC’s Consumer Affairs Division and the OPC.
Content of Notice. The notice shall contain all the following information:

- A statement that the utility intends to shut-off gas and/or electric service to the master-metered building
- The name, address, email address and phone number of the utility customer (building owner or manager)
- The address of the master-metered building
- The date on or after which the shut-off will occur
- The utility’s office address and customer service number
- A statement of the rights of the occupants related to the service shut-off

Rights of the Occupants – Delay for Serious Illness/Life-Support

- The occupants have the right to delay termination for an initial period of up to 30 days beyond the initial shut-off date if service loss will aggravate a serious illness or the occupant relies on life-support equipment
- Steps necessary for the occupant to notify the utility of the medical situation and get the necessary medical certification

Notice Requirements - Customer Information

- It is the responsibility of the utility customer (building owner/manager) to notify the utility if it is not able to pay for utility service
- Limited income occupants may be eligible for financial or relocation assistance through 211 Maryland, or financial assistance through OHEP’s MEAP program, if relocation is needed
- Contact information for the PSC, OPC, utility and Office of Attorney General, Consumer Protection Division

These changes to the notice requirements for service terminations in master-metered buildings are a result of advocacy by the Office of People’s Counsel in PSC Case Nos. 9444 and 9445 and RM65.