

FACT SHEET 7 - UTILITY SERVICE TERMINATIONS

1. A utility **can** terminate service only for reasons approved by the Commission:

- Nonpayment of bills or security deposit
- Failure to comply with company rules
- Refusal to allow reasonable access to utility equipment
- Fraudulent or misleading application
- Non-disclosure of material facts
- Co-occupant bills
- Safety hazards
- Tampering with utility equipment
- Theft of energy

NOTE: **Theft of energy (TOE) investigations** have increased with the installation of AMI (smart) meters. These investigations can interfere with a customer's ability to use electric or gas arrearage funds from OHEP for past due bills.

2. A utility **cannot** terminate service for a disputed bill. To get this protection, a customer must file a complaint with the Commission disputing the reason for the termination **before** the utility shuts off service.

- The customer is required to pay the undisputed portion of a bill.

3. If a customer is off service, a utility is not required to restore service after a customer files a complaint.

4. A utility **cannot** terminate service for these reasons:

- Outstanding bill of a previous occupant (unless customer was a co-occupant) or landlord
- Merchandise or service contracts
- Service used in non-residential units (e.g., commercial)
- A past-due utility bill that the customer guaranteed for another customer
- A bill that is outstanding for less than 3 months (if the security deposit exceeds the bill)
- An outstanding bill that is \$100 or less and delinquent less than 3 months
- A charge to correct a meter error the utility did not discover for a period greater than 4 months
- An outstanding bill that is more than 7 years old, **unless**:
 - Customer signed a payment agreement or
 - The outstanding bill is for service obtained in a deceptive or fraudulent manner, or as a result of certain co-occupancy situations.