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PUBLIC UTILITIES

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

All Utilities (Customer Service)

Proposed Amendments: N.J.A.C. 14:3-3 et seq.

Authorized By: The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, Joseph L. Fiordaliso, President, Mary-Anna Holden, Dianne Solomon, Upendra J. Chivukula, and Robert M. Gordon, Commissioners.

Authority: N.J.S.A. 48:2-1 et seq., in particular 48:2-13, 48:3-51, and 48:3-87.

Calendar Reference: See Summary below for explanation of exception to calendar requirement.

BPU Docket Number: AX19060729

Proposal Number:

Comments may be submitted through [DATE], by e-mail **in Microsoft Word format**, or in a format that can be easily converted to Word, to: rule.comments@bpu.nj.gov, or on paper to:

Aida Camacho-Welch, Secretary

New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

ATTN: BPU Docket Number: AX19060729

44 S. Clinton Ave.

PO Box 350

Trenton, NJ 08625-0350

Full text of the proposal follows (additions indicated in boldface **thus**; deletions indicated in brackets [thus]):

SUBCHAPTER 3A. DISCONTINUANCE AND RESTORATION OF SERVICE

14:3-3A.1.1 Definitions

The following words and terms, when used in this subchapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“Unknown accounts” means a utility account where there is no customer of record, yet there is active consumption on the meter.

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“Licensed Medical Professional” means a health care provider with prescriptive authority.

14:3-3A.2 Discontinuance for nonpayment

- (i) Discontinuance of residential service for nonpayment is prohibited for up to [60] **90** days **initially** if a medical emergency exists within the residential premises, which would be aggravated by a discontinuance of service. The following conditions apply to this 90-day prohibition on discontinuance:

1. The utility may require the customer to provide reasonable proof of inability to pay;
2. The utility may require the customer to submit a written [physician’s] statement by a **licensed medical professional** to the utility stating the existence of the emergency, its nature and probable duration, and that discontinuance of service will aggravate the medical emergency;

[3. The utility may require submittal of a recertification by the licensed medical professional as to the continuing nature of the medical emergency after 30 days.]

- (j) The Board may extend the 90-day period in (i) above for an additional 30 days for good cause. The customer shall request such an extension from Board staff in writing. The request shall be accompanied by an updated **document from a [physician’s] licensed medical professional that meets** the requirements of (i)² above. Pending the Board’s consideration and decision regarding the request for extension, utility service shall not be disconnected.

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(k) When a public utility disconnects service to an unknown account, and the utility is notified that a medical emergency exists in the residential premises, the utility shall:

1. Restore service immediately;

2. Allow 14 days to apply for service; and

3. Allow 7 additional days following the service activation date or 21 days following the date the utility is notified of a medical emergency, whichever date is later, to submit a medical certification to the utility written by a licensed medical professional in accordance with (i)2 above.

(l) When a public utility disconnects service to a master metered premise in which the landlord is the actual customer of record and the utility has been notified that a medical emergency exists by a tenant, the utility shall restore service for a period of 7 days to allow the customer of record to resolve the non-payment issue and to provide the tenant with time to make alternative arrangements.

14:3-3A.4 Additional notice requirements for discontinuance of residential and special customers.

(d) Electric and gas utilities shall, [semi-annually] solicit information from their residential customers **quarterly, at a minimum**, in order to determine the presence of life-sustaining equipment on the customer's premises. This subsection does not apply to water, wastewater, or telecommunications public utilities.

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(e) All utilities shall develop customer outreach plans that educate the public and customers on the procedures and guidelines to qualify and apply for medical certification status to be distributed to all customers quarterly.