



Iowa Utilities Board Fall Customer Service Meetings

September 8 - 30, 2014



2014 IUB Customer Service Fall Meeting

Welcome

Introductions

Informational Packet

Overview of Agenda



Iowa Utilities Board

The Iowa Utilities Board regulates utilities to ensure that reasonably priced, reliable, environmentally responsible, and safe utility services are available to all Iowans.

IUB Jurisdiction & Regulatory Authority

The Board's authority is stated in summary form in Iowa Code §§ 476.1 and 474.9. The Board regulates the rates and services of certain electric, natural gas, and water utilities, the services of communications utilities, and generally supervises all pipelines and the transmission, sale, and distribution of electrical current.

Iowa Administrative Rules

IUB Website: iub.iowa.gov

- Under left navigation tabs:
Click [Links](#) (off-site)
- Click [Iowa Administrative Code – Utilities Division \(199\)](#) and select:
- [Chapter 19 – Natural Gas](#)
- [Chapter 20 – Electricity](#)
- [Chapter 21 – Water](#)
(IUB only regulates Iowa-American Water Co.)
- [Chapter 22 – Telephone](#)

The screenshot shows a navigation menu on the left with the following items: HOME, About the IUB, Board Activity, Electronic Filing System, Complaints about Utilities, Industry Topics, Newsroom, How to File, Rules and Rulemaking, Links (off-site), and Contact Us. A green arrow points to the 'Links (off-site)' item. To the right, under the heading 'Links', there is a list of links: Tariffs, Business Regulatory Assistance, Utility Regulation-related links, Office of Consumer Advocate, Iowa Administrative Code - Utilities Division [199], Iowa Administrative Code - Complete, and Code of Iowa. A green arrow points from the 'Links (off-site)' item in the menu to the 'Links' section.

Most customer service rules can be found at 199 IAC 19.4, 20.4, and 22.4.

Iowa Utilities Board

Customer Service Information

IUB Website: iub.iowa.gov



Click on Consumer Information at the top of the IUB home page

Consumer Information

Energy

Telecommunications

All Utility Types

[Complaints about Utilities](#)

[Informational Brochures](#)

[Utility Service Providers by Town](#) (Town Service List) (PDF - 331 kb)

[Utility Service Area Maps](#) - online order form

[Common Ground Iowa](#)

[Iowa One Call](#)

Energy Utility Information

Customer Rights and Responsibilities (MS Word format)

— [Natural Gas](#)

— [Electric](#)

[Safety Tips](#)

[Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#)

[Energy-saving Tips and Links](#)

[Customer Contribution Funds](#)

[Residential Past Due Accounts and Disconnection Data](#)

Lifeline and Link-Up

National Lifeline Awareness Week

September 8-14, 2014

NATIONAL Lifeline is a federal benefit program which provides a monthly bill discount on basic telephone service for eligible consumers.

- Federal rules prohibit eligible low-income consumers from receiving more than ONE Lifeline benefit per household. Eligible consumers may receive a Lifeline monthly discount on either a landline or wireless service, but may not receive a Lifeline discount on both services at the same time.
- A household means everyone (including children and people who are not related to you) who lives in your home and shares income and household expenses.
- Consumers can apply for the lifeline discount through their local telecommunications company.
- Eligible households can receive up to a \$9.25 per month discount on their local telephone bill.

Link-Up provides telephone installation benefits only to eligible low-income consumers who live on federally-recognized Tribal lands.

http://www.state.ia.us/government/com/util/consumer_information/lifeline.html

Energy Assistance Programs

LIHEAP and Home Weatherization

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally-funded program designed to assist low-income families meet the cost of home heating. The LIHEAP program is not designed to pay a household's total energy costs, but to provide partial assistance in the payment of residential heating costs for eligible households.

LIHEAP applications are accepted on a first come/first served basis at [your local community action agency](#) from November 1, 2014, through April 30, 2015 (*beginning October 1, 2014, for households with elderly and/or disabled members*), Monday through Friday, or as posted at the local office.

- **LIHEAP Eligibility** = 150% of [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#) (November 1, 2014 – April 30, 2015)

Weatherization Eligibility = 200% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (April 1, 2014 – March 31, 2015)

- http://www.dcaa.iowa.gov/bureau_EA/whos_eligible.html

Contact Information: John Burnquist 515-281-4893 john.burnquist@iowa.gov

IUB Customer Service Complaint Rules

199 IAC Chapter 6

Initial handling of complaint

- Utility will respond within **20** days of the date on which the complaint is forwarded to the utility by IUB staff
- Exception - Slamming/Cramming complaints – within **ten** days

Request for additional information

- Utility or customer will have **20** days to respond to a request for additional information

Proposed Resolution

- If no request for formal proceedings is made within **14** days after issuance of the proposed resolution or the specified date of utility action, the proposed resolution will be deemed binding on all parties

IUB Customer Service

Complaint Stats

Telephone Complaints

	2014 (YTD)	2013	2012	2011
Gas	233	205	198	349
Electric	696	792	771	911
Water	79	93	70	90
Telephone/LD	220	369	342	489
Totals	1,228	1,459	1,381	1,839

Written C Dockets

	2014 (YTD-119 Actual)	2013 (Actual 132)	2012 (Actual 157)	2011 (Actual 169)
Gas	17	11	20	28
Electric	55	63	88	95
Water	5	2	1	5
Telephone/LD	50	73	74	83
Totals	127	149	183	211
FCU Dockets	12 (4 Energy)	17 (5 Energy)	19 (5 Energy)	32 (13 Energy)

Regular Disconnection Rules

199 IAC 19.4(15) or 20.4(15)

Customer rights and responsibilities must be included on every disconnection notice.

- 12-day disconnection notice sent if bill is unpaid after 20 days
- 24-hour requirements are different during winter moratorium vs. non-moratorium
- 48-hour required when a landlord and a tenant are involved
- 12-day notice not required on defaulted bill payment agreements

Regular Disconnection Rules

Docket NOI-2014-0003: INQUIRY INTO BILL PAYMENT AGREEMENTS

- August 6, 2014 - Board Order to Responses
 - Verify IUB contact information on payment
 - Requirements for a payment agreement/minimum of twelve months
 - Considerations in determining the reasonable agreement:
 - Residential customer's current household income, ability to pay, payment history, size of the bill, length of time bill has been outstanding and any special circumstances creating extreme hardship within the household
 - Terms of payment agreements - 199 IAC 19.4(10) or 20.4(11)
 - First agreement requirements
 - Customer granted at least one late payment up to four days beyond the due date and the first payment agreement shall remain in effect
 - Second agreement requirements

Regular Disconnection Rules

Docket NOI-2014-0003 (continued)

Level Payment Plan Rules - 199 IAC 19.4(11)"e" or 20.4(12)"e"

- Be offered to each eligible customer with the customers initial request for service
- Allow for entry into the level payment plan anytime during the calendar year
- Provide for the customer ability to request termination at any time
- Use computation method that produces a reasonable monthly amount
 - Computation method used by utility shall be described in the utility's tariff
 - May be recomputed monthly, quarterly, rolling twelve, customer request
- Delinquency in payment shall be subject to same collection and disconnection procedures as other accounts, late payment charge applied to the level payment amount

Regular Disconnection Rules

Customer Complaint Issues

Back Billing - 199 IAC 19.4(13) or 20.4(14) Adjustment of Bills

Deposit rules – 199 IAC 19.4(2) or 20.4(3) – Iowa Code § 476.20(5)(a)

- Total deposit for any residential or commercial customer shall not be greater than the highest billing of service for one month for the current location for the previous 12-month period
- FCU-2013-0008 - IUB has jurisdiction over deposits requested by municipals

Statute of Limitations – Iowa Code § 614.1

- 5 years (verbal/unwritten contracts) and 10 years (written contracts)

Late Payment Fees – 199 IAC 19.4(11)“b” or 20.4(12)“b”

- A utility’s late payment charge shall not exceed 1.5 percent per month of the past due amount

Winter Disconnection Rules

Winter Energy Assistance rules – 199 IAC 19.4(15)“d”(9) or 20.4(15)“d”(10)

- Household may not be disconnected for non-payment from November 1 through April 1.
- A household may be disconnected April 2 or after with proper notice from utility.
- Customer payments encouraged during moratorium to avoid a large balance on April 2.
- Utilities should not be sending overt disconnection notices to customers protected on LIHEAP during winter moratorium.

Severe Cold Weather rules – 199 IAC 19.4(15)“d”(7) or 20.4(15)“d”(8)

- If the temperature is forecast by the National Weather Service to go below 20 degrees or colder in the coming 24 hours, you cannot disconnect residential customers.
- If utility has already posted the premise and disconnection is delayed due to the temperature, you can proceed with disconnection when the temperature goes up.
- If the disconnect is delayed more than a few days, staff recommends posting a new 24-hour disconnect notice.

Other Disconnection Rules

Military rules – 199 IAC 19.4(15)“d”(10) or 20.4(15)“d”(11)

- If one of the heads of household is a service member deployed for military service, disconnection cannot occur at the residence during deployment or within 90 days after the end of deployment.

Health of a Resident rules – 199 IAC 19.4(15)“d”(8) or 20.4(15)“d”(9)

- 30-day medical stay if a permanent resident of the home has an especial health danger.
- One time per occurrence; no extension or renewal.
- Same person, same illness, same debt.



For questions or more information, contact:

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Iowa Utilities Board

