

2023 Consumer's Bill of Rights

The following utility Customer's Bill of Rights is a synopsis of the most frequently cited sections of the New Jersey Administrative Code Title 14, Chapter 3. The Utility Customer's Bill of Rights is not meant to replace the regulations contained in N.J.A.C. 14:3 but is intended to give the utility customer a concise plain language guide to the regulations. Any application of the Utility Customer's Bill of Rights must be consistent with the regulations as contained in N.J.A.C. 14:3.

1. You have the right to safe, adequate, and proper utility service if you are a qualified applicant.
2. You are not required to pay an unreasonable deposit amount in order to receive utility service.
3. You have the right to a "budget billing plan" with your utility company if you are a residential electric, gas, water, and/or wastewater utility customer. This is a plan that allows you to pay a set amount each month for a set period of time.
4. You have the right to at least one "deferred payment plan" per year with your utility company if you have an outstanding bill you cannot pay. This is a plan that considers your financial situation and allows you to make payments on the outstanding bill as long as you stay current with payments on any new charges.
5. You have the right to dispute a charge on your utility bill with the utility company. As long as you pay the amount not in dispute, your utility service may not be turned off while the utility company investigates the disputed charge.
6. You have the right to have your meter tested by your utility company free of charge once every 12 months if you think it is not working properly. You may request a BPU employee be there when the utility company is doing the test.
7. You have the right to at least 10 days written notice from your utility company before your utility service may be turned off for non-payment. Your service may be turned off after that time if you do not make a reasonable payment toward what you owe or if you do not agree to a payment plan with your utility company.
8. You have a right to reasonable advance notice from the utility company before your service can be suspended or turned off for reasons other than non-payment.
9. Unless there is a safety-related emergency, a utility company may not suspend or turn off utility service outside the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday.
10. Unless there is a safety-related emergency, a utility company may not suspend or turn off utility service on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, a New Jersey State holiday or the day before a New Jersey State holiday, or if a valid medical emergency exists in your household.
11. If you are a customer eligible for protection under the Winter Termination Program, you have the right to utility services from November 15 to March 15. You must notify your utility company of your eligibility under this protection.
12. If you live in a multi-family dwelling unit, you have the right to receive notice if the utility company plans on turning off service to the building. The utility company must either post a notice in a common area and/or send the notice to you as an occupant of the dwelling.

13. If the amount of electricity, gas, water, or wastewater shown on your utility bill appears unexplainably high or suspicious, you have the right to have the utility company perform a “diversion of service” investigation on your behalf.
14. You have the right to continue receiving utility service as long as you pay the charges for the utility service you received. A utility company may not send you notice threatening to turn off your utility service based on extra charges.
15. You have the right to have your deposit returned to you once you close your account and the final bill is settled. The utility company must give you the choice between having your deposit applied to your account as a credit or as a separate check.
16. You should not be assessed a late payment charge on your residential customer utility bill.