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Illinois winter disconnection rule in effect through March

Chicago, Il – The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is reminding customers that the state's winter weather rule is in effect from December 1 - March 31. The winter weather rule limits utilities from disconnecting eligible customers who use electric or gas as their primary source of home heating.

"Illinois winters are known for frigid temperatures and frequent snowfall. The winter weather rule protects customers who might otherwise struggle to stay warm during the coldest months of the year," said **ICC Chairman Doug Scott**.

The winter weather rule protects residential customers from disconnections when temperatures are forecasted to be at or below 32 F, and on days preceding holidays and weekends when the forecast is expected to drop to freezing.

Residential customers or master-metered apartment buildings who used gas or electricity as the primary source of space heating equipment during the previous winter cannot be disconnected for non-payment unless: the utility has offered the customer a Deferred Payment Agreement (DPA) with a maximum down payment of 10 percent; provided the customer with contact information for public and private aid agencies; the customer refused to enter a DPA; and all disconnection notices provisions have been met.

To protect Illinoisans during dangerous cold, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and Percentage of Income Payment Plan (PIPP) participants; electric space heating customers; and military personnel and veterans cannot be disconnected if they fall behind on their utility bills. The rule excludes disconnections related to theft, tampering, or safety.

Households struggling to pay their utility bills are encouraged to apply for LIHEAP annually.

Customers with past due balances should contact their utility to enroll in a DPA. Customers whose electric or gas service has already been disconnected should contact their utility directly to see if they qualify for reconnection at less than the full amount owed.

Ameren, Nicor, North Shore, and Peoples Gas natural gas customers and ComEd electric customers who qualify for LIHEAP or whose incomes are at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for a monthly discount on their bills through the state's low-income discount rates.

Enrollment in the above programs is free of charge, and customers can access LIHEAP benefits regardless of immigration status.

Contact the ICC's **Consumer Services Division** at **1-800-524-0795** for further guidance or to file a complaint against a utility.

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About the Illinois Commerce Commission

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is a quasi-judicial body made up of five Commissioners. Through its Public Utility Program, the Commission oversees the provision of adequate, reliable, efficient, and safe utility services at the least possible cost to Illinois citizens served by electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water, and sewer public utility companies. Through its Transportation Regulatory Program, the Commission oversees public safety and consumer protection programs with regard to intrastate commercial motor carriers of general freight, household goods movers, relocation towers, safety towers, personal property warehouses, and repossession agencies. The Commission's Rail Safety Program also inspects and regulates the general safety of railroad tracks, facilities, and equipment in the state.

To learn more about the Commission, its offices, and bureaus, click here. If you are a consumer who needs help resolving a utility dispute call 800-524-0795 or file an online complaint here. For a complaint related to transportation, call 217-782-6448.

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