Mississippi Ratepayers' Bill of Rights

The following Rights are available to all residential utility customers in the State of Mississippi under the provisions of the Mississippi Public Service Commission's Rules and Regulations Governing Public Utility Service or the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure.

RIGHT 1

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid ~~disconnection~~ discontinuation of service for nonpayment on any ~~Friday,~~ Saturday or~~,~~ Sunday or any holiday observed by the utility, unless the utility is open to accept payment and restore service on those days. ~~, legal holiday, or the day before a legal holiday.~~ (See Service Rule 8.A.2.)

RIGHT 2

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid ~~disconnection~~ discontinuation of service for a period of sixty (60) days for nonpayment when the ~~company~~ utility receives written notice from a medical doctor licensed to practice in the State of Mississippi, or any adjoining state, ~~health care provider~~ certifying that discontinuance of service would create a ~~medical emergency~~life threatening situation for the customer or ~~any member~~other permanent resident of the customer's household. (See Service Rule 8.F.1)

RIGHT 3

Ratepayers shall have the right to be given a written notice from the utility company of pending ~~disconnection~~ discontinuation of service at least 5 days prior to disconnection of service. This notice ~~must~~ shall include a ~~summary of your rights and responsibilities to avoid disconnection as well as the specific~~ date on or after which discontinuance may occur~~of disconnection~~. (See Service Rule 8.A.1)

RIGHT 4

Ratepayers shall have the right to negotiate with any electric or natural gas company a ~~deferred~~ delayed payment plan to avoid ~~disconnection~~ discontinuation of service for a delinquent account. (See Service Rule 8.B.1)

RIGHT 5

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid ~~disconnection~~ discontinuation of service for failure to pay ~~any amount charged for non utility services or products~~merchandise purchased from the utility. (See Service Rule 7.F.2 and 8.F.2)

RIGHT 6

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid ~~disconnection~~ discontinuation of service or refusal of service because a former occupant, not of the same household, failed to pay prior bill. (See Service Rule 7.F.1)

RIGHT 7

Ratepayers~~, 65 years of age or older,~~ shall have the right to designate another person to receive all information regarding their services including notices regarding past due bills and disconnection of service. (See Service Rule 6)

RIGHT 8

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid disconnection of their electric or gas service between December 1 and April 1 if they are participating in the "mid-winter rule" as described in the Rules and Regulations Governing Public Utility Service. (See Service Rule 8.E)

RIGHT 9

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid ~~disconnection~~ discontinuation of service of electric or natural gas service for nonpayment, if the ratepayer has been approved for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) benefits in an amount equal to the delinquent balance, payable within thirty (30) days, and the notice of the approval has been given to the utility provider. (See Service Rule 8.B.2)

RIGHT 10

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid ~~disconnection~~ discontinuation of service for failure to pay a portion of any bill that is in ~~formal~~ dispute, provided that payments that a deposit is made by the ratepayer ~~are made~~ for amounts ~~not~~ in dispute. ~~Formal dispute shall mean that written notice has been provided to the utility company and the Commission.~~ (See Service Rule 10.B)

RIGHT 11

Ratepayers shall have the right to negotiate monthly installments for initial service deposits in excess of One Hundred Dollars ($100.00) provided that the entire amount of the deposit is paid within 60 days. (See Service Rule 9.A.3.)

RIGHT 12

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid ~~disconnection~~ discontinuation of electric or natural gas service for nonpayment of bills if, as of 8:00 a.m. on the scheduled disconnection day, a ~~hard~~ freeze ~~watch or~~ warning has been issued by the National Weather Service for the county of the scheduled disconnection. (See Service Rule 8.F.3)

RIGHT 13

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid ~~disconnection~~ discontinuation of electric ~~or natural gas~~ service for nonpayment of bills if, as of 8:00 a.m. on the scheduled disconnection day, an ~~Heat Advisory or~~ Excessive Heat Warning has been issued by the National Weather Service ~~or the Department of Health~~ for the county of the scheduled disconnection. (See Service Rule 8.F.3)

~~**RIGHT 14**~~

~~Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid disconnection for nonpayment during a declared state of emergency, if the county in which the ratepayer resides is under the declared state of emergency, and upon request, the utility must offer the ratepayer a deferred payment plan for bills due during the emergency. (See Service Rule 8)~~

RIGHT 14~~5~~

Ratepayers who have had their service discontinued~~that have been disconnected~~ for non-payment, shall have the right to have their service restored ~~be reconnected~~ in a prompt and efficient manner on the first business day after the balance due is paid, except under extreme circumstances where ongoing restoration efforts prevent reconnection from occurring within that

time period.~~, not to exceed a maximum of 24 hours, after the balance due is paid.~~ (See Service Rule 8.A.3)

RIGHT 15~~6~~

Ratepayers shall have the right to request a written explanation if the utility company refuses to initially serve a consumer. When the ratepayer has provided the utility company with a valid mailing address, ~~T~~the explanation shall be mailed ~~must be provided~~to the ratepayer within seven (7) business days and shall include the reason service is being refused and what actions the consumer must take in order to receive service~~do to correct the situation~~. (See Service Rule 7)

RIGHT 16~~7~~

Ratepayers shall be given ~~unbiased,~~ accurate, and understandable information concerning the price and terms of service. ~~Customer's bills will be rendered in an easy to understand format.~~ (See Service Rule 10)

RIGHT 17~~8~~

Ratepayers shall have access through the Mississippi Public Service Commission to an independent administrative process that provides a simple, quick, and effective means of resolving complaints about service and bills from all electric, gas, water, and telecommunications service providers over which the Commission has appropriate jurisdiction. Ratepayers are encouraged to attempt to resolve the dispute directly with the utility company. ~~through the Mississippi Public Service Commission without fear of retribution from the utility provider.~~ (See Procedural Rule 11)

~~**RIGHT 19**~~

~~Ratepayers shall have the option to speak with a live company representative, during the company's normal business hours, rather than using the automated system. (See Service Rule 6)~~

RIGHT 18~~20~~

Ratepayers shall have the right to intervene in any case before the Mississippi Public Service Commission affecting their rates or their utility service. (See Procedural Rule 6.121)

RIGHT ~~21~~9

Ratepayers shall have the right to register their residential telephone number on the Mississippi No Call Registry at no charge. (See Procedural Rule 28)

RIGHT ~~22~~0

Ratepayers shall have the right to file a complaint against telemarketers who violate the Mississippi No Call Law. (See Procedural Rule 28)

RIGHT 21~~3~~

Ratepayers shall have the right to view or listen to Mississippi Public Service Commission hearings and docket calls that are held in the Commission's Courtroom via the Internet. (See Procedural Rule 15)

Mississippi Ratepayers' Bill of Rights

The following Rights are available to all residential utility customers in the State of Mississippi under the provisions of the Mississippi Public Service Commission's Rules and Regulations Governing Public Utility Service or the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure.

RIGHT 1

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid discontinuation of service for nonpayment on any Saturday or Sunday or any holiday observed by the utility, unless the utility is open to accept payment and restore service on those days.(See Service Rule 8.A.2.)

RIGHT 2

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid discontinuation of service for a period of sixty (60) days for nonpayment when the utility receives written notice from a medical doctor licensed to practice in the State of Mississippi, or any adjoining state, certifying that discontinuance of service would create a life threatening situation for the customer or other permanent resident of the customer's household. (See Service Rule 8.F.1)

RIGHT 3

Ratepayers shall have the right to be given a written notice from the utility company of pending discontinuation of service at least five (5) days prior to disconnection of service. This notice shall include a date on or after which discontinuance may occur. (See Service Rule 8.A.1)

RIGHT 4

Ratepayers shall have the right to negotiate with any electric or natural gas company a delayed payment plan to avoid discontinuation of service for a delinquent account in accordance with the utility's terms and conditions. (See Service Rule 8.B.1)

RIGHT 5

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid discontinuation of service for failure to pay for merchandise purchased from the utility. (See Service Rule 7.F.2 and 8.F.2)

RIGHT 6

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid discontinuation of service or refusal of service because a former occupant, not of the same household, failed to pay prior bill. (See Service Rule 7.F.1)

RIGHT 7

Ratepayers shall have the right to designate another person to receive all information regarding their services including notices regarding past due bills and disconnection of service. (See Service Rule 6)

RIGHT 8

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid disconnection of their electric or gas service between December 1 and April 1 if they are participating in the "mid-winter rule" as described in the Rules and Regulations Governing Public Utility Service. (See Service Rule 8.E)

RIGHT 9

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid discontinuation of service of electric or natural gas service for nonpayment, if the ratepayer has been approved for Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) benefits in an amount equal to the delinquent balance, payable within thirty (30) days, and the notice of the approval has been given to the utility provider. (See Service Rule 8.B.2.)

RIGHT 10

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid discontinuation of service for failure to pay a portion of any bill that is in dispute, provided that a deposit is made by the ratepayer for amounts in dispute. (See Service Rule 10.B)

RIGHT 11

Ratepayers shall have the right to negotiate monthly installments for initial service deposits in excess of One Hundred Dollars ($100.00) provided that the entire amount of the deposit is paid within 60 days. (See Service Rule 9.A.3.)

RIGHT 12

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid discontinuation of electric or natural gas service for nonpayment of bills if, as of 8:00 a.m. on the scheduled disconnection day, a freeze warning has been issued by the National Weather Service for the county of the scheduled disconnection. (See Service Rule 8.F.3)

RIGHT 13

Ratepayers shall have the right to avoid discontinuation of electric service for nonpayment of bills if, as of 8:00 a.m. on the scheduled disconnection day, an Excessive Heat Warning has been issued by the National Weather Service for the county of the scheduled disconnection. (See Service Rule 8.F.3)

RIGHT 14

Ratepayers who have had their service discontinued for non-payment, shall have the right to have their service restored in a prompt and efficient manner on the first business day after the balance due is paid, except under extreme circumstances where ongoing restoration efforts prevent reconnection from occurring within that time period. (See Service Rule 8.A.3)

RIGHT 15

Ratepayers shall have the right to request a written explanation if the utility company refuses to initially serve a consumer. When the ratepayer has provided the utility company with a valid mailing address, the explanation shall be mailed to the ratepayer within seven (7) business days and shall include the reason service is being refused and what actions the consumer must take in order to receive service. (See Service Rule 7)

RIGHT 16

Ratepayers shall be given accurate and understandable information concerning the price and terms of service. (See Service Rule 10.A)

RIGHT 17

Ratepayers shall have access through the Mississippi Public Service Commission to an independent administrative process that provides a simple, quick, and effective means of resolving complaints about service and bills from all electric, gas, water, and telecommunications service providers over which the Commission has appropriate jurisdiction. Ratepayers are encouraged to attempt to resolve the dispute directly with the utility company. (See Procedural Rule 11)

RIGHT 18

Ratepayers shall have the right to intervene in any case before the Mississippi Public Service Commission affecting their rates or their utility service. (See Procedural Rule 6.121)

RIGHT 19

Ratepayers shall have the right to register their residential telephone number on the Mississippi No Call Registry at no charge. (See Procedural Rule 28)

RIGHT 20

Ratepayers shall have the right to file a complaint against telemarketers who violate the Mississippi No Call Law. (See Procedural Rule 28)

RIGHT 21

Ratepayers shall have the right to view or listen to Mississippi Public Service Commission hearings and docket calls that are held in the Commission's Courtroom via the Internet. (See Procedural Rule 15)