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## CASD Bulletin No. 2015-04

Public Utilities Commission

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## CASD Bulletin No. 2015-04

To: All Electric & Gas Utilities

From: Susan E. Cottle, Deputy Director,   
Consumer Assistance and Safety Division (CASD)

Date: October 16, 2015

Re: Reconnection Information

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This bulletin provides guidance regarding the requirements of §12 (B)(1)(b) of Chapter 815, which covers the reconnection of service for residential customers on a payment arrangement at the time of disconnection.

Questions have been brought to the CASD regarding the terms for reconnection for residential consumers disconnected for non-payment who were on a payment arrangement at the time of the disconnection and who seek reconnection more than 30 days after being disconnected. The questions have focused on the amount a utility can require from a residential consumer to be reconnected.

Section 12 of Chapter 815 covers Reconnection of Service. Subsection (B)(1)(b) states:

- b. Customers on a payment arrangement at the time of disconnection. If the cause of the disconnection was a broken payment arrangement, the utility must either:
  - i. require the customer to pay the catch-up amount on the arrangement, in addition to a deposit if a deposit is allowed by section 7(A) of this Chapter, and a reconnection fee, as a prerequisite for reconnection. In these situations, the utility must offer the customer the option of paying the deposit in three monthly installments consistent with the process described in section 7(F)(1) of this Chapter, with the exception that the first monthly payment cannot be due earlier than the due date of the first bill issued following the reconnection; or**

- ii. *offer the customer a new payment arrangement. If the utility demands a deposit as a prerequisite for reconnection, the utility must offer the options listed in subsection B(1)(a) above to the customer.*

The term “customer” used in section 12 refers to the status of the consumer at the time of the disconnection, not the at the point of reconnection. Thus, this section is applicable whether the consumer is seeking to reconnect service at the same or different location and whether the consumer is seeking reconnection within or beyond 30 days of the disconnection. This, in turn, means that subsection (i) allows a utility to require the payment of a catch-up amount from a consumer seeking reconnection prior to providing service when the cause of the disconnection was a broken payment arrangement, whether the consumer is a customer or an applicant.

Please note: The term “catch-up amount” is the amount due on a payment arrangement as of the time of disconnection. Payments that come due AFTER the disconnection cannot be required for reconnection. In most cases, the catch-up amount is the amount that was due on the arrangement when the disconnection notice was issued. An exception to this would be if another payment on the arrangement came due after the notice was issued, but *before* or on the same day the disconnection occurred. This means:

- Any payment due BEFORE OR ON the day of disconnection CAN be required before reconnection.
- Any payment due AFTER the day of the disconnection CANNOT be required for reconnection.

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This bulletin is issued pursuant to section 7(C) of Chapter 110 of the Commission's rules. It represents an interpretation by the CASD and does not constitute res judicata or legal precedent in any subsequent proceeding, nor is it binding on any party. In any subsequent enforcement action initiated by the Commission, however, any person's justifiable reliance upon the bulletin may be considered in mitigation of any penalty sought to be assessed.