

Maryland Customer

# Rights and Responsibilities

October 2020

**This booklet was prepared in accordance with Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) regulations to highlight and answer some of the questions you may have about your utility service.**

## **How to Contact Potomac Edison**

### **Outages and Emergencies**

For electrical outages and emergencies, call our automated reporting line at 888-LIGHTSS (888-544-4877) 24 hours a day, or visit [firstenergycorp.com/reportoutage](http://firstenergycorp.com/reportoutage). Also, our text messaging option makes it easy to report a power outage and request a status update on a reported outage. Text “REG” to **544487** (LIGHTS) to sign up.

### **Customer Service**

If you have questions about your electric service, the accuracy of your bill, termination notices, or if you need to transfer service, call our Customer Contact Center Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Our automated phone system is available 24 hours a day for a variety of self-serve options related to your account.

**Potomac Edison, Customer Contact Center  
800-686-0011 • Hearing or speech impaired  
customers should dial 711.**

### **Text and Email Alerts**

We also offer text and email alerts that allow you to receive billing reminders, including when a new bill is available, a payment is due, a payment has been posted or a payment was not received. For more information, or to sign up, visit [firstenergycorp.com/connect](http://firstenergycorp.com/connect).

### **Social Media**

Follow us on  [@PotomacEdison](https://twitter.com/PotomacEdison) and  
Like us on  [facebook.com/PotomacEdison](https://facebook.com/PotomacEdison)

## **Complaint Procedure**

Our employees will investigate your concerns and notify you of the findings. If you're not satisfied with Potomac Edison's response to your inquiry, you can call or write the PSC within seven days of your receipt of the company's decision. Contact information for the Commission is listed below:

**Consumer Affairs Division  
Maryland Public Service Commission  
6 St. Paul Street, Baltimore, MD 21202  
Phone: 410-767-8000  
800-492-0474 • TTY: 800-201-7165  
Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday - Friday  
(except holidays)**

In the case of a disputed bill, you may be required to pay only the non-disputed portion of that bill during your complaint investigation. If this portion is paid, your service will not be terminated, except for reasons listed under “Termination without Prior Notice” on page 15.

## **Applying for Electric Service**

You may write, call or visit [firstenergycorp.com/movein](http://firstenergycorp.com/movein) to apply. We may require you to provide identification. More than one person in a residence may be classified as a customer and listed on the account. You may be required to complete an application form before we provide service. New or existing customers who own or manage buildings where multiple users share a common meter – or master meter – should notify us at **800-686-0011**. Service may be denied for any of the reasons stated under “Termination with Seven-day Notice” on pages 15-16.

## Security Deposits - Residential Customers

Security deposits are required unless the applicant otherwise establishes credit. Alternate methods of establishing credit are found in Commission regulations (COMAR 20.30.02). The deposit will be two-twelfths of the applicant's estimated charges for the next 12 months, but no less than \$5. The deposit will be waived for applicants 60 years of age or older with proof of age, intent to be the primary consumer and no outstanding bill payments due.

A customer with established credit who fails to pay a bill by the expiration date of a termination notice may be required to re-establish credit by paying a deposit in addition to paying the outstanding bill and reconnection charge if a prior deposit has been refunded or applied to the account.

A present or former customer applying for service may be required to re-establish credit if he or she owes an outstanding payment, was terminated during the past 12 months because of nonpayment of a bill, failed to pay a bill by the due date on more than two occasions in the past 12 months, is more than two months in arrears, or the conditions of service or basis of original credit have materially changed. After 12 months during which no more than two payments were paid after the date due, and if service was not terminated for nonpayment of a bill, the deposit and accrued interest will be refunded or credited to the customer's bill.

For those 60 years of age or older, deposits will be refunded upon request with proof of age and no past-due balance.

If a customer requests, certain deposits may be paid over time. Deposits between \$50 and \$150 may be made by partial payments over a period of at least eight weeks. Deposits of greater than \$150 may be paid over a period of at least 12 weeks.

## Security Deposits - Non-residential Customers

Security deposits are required if the applicant has not demonstrated good paying habits and/or otherwise established credit in accordance with Commission regulations (COMAR 20.30.01). The deposit shall not exceed the maximum estimated charge for two consecutive bills or 90 days, whichever is less.

A customer with established credit who fails to pay a bill by the expiration date of a termination notice may be required to re-establish credit by paying a deposit, the outstanding bill and a reconnection charge.

A present or former customer applying for service may be required to re-establish credit if he or she owes an outstanding bill, was terminated during the past 12 months because of nonpayment of a bill, failed to pay a bill by the due date on more than two occasions in the past 12 months, is more than one month in arrears, or the conditions of service or basis of original credit has materially changed.

After the first four years of service following payment of the deposit, the deposit and accrued interest will be refunded or credited to the customer's bill if the following conditions are met:

1. Have not been terminated for nonpayment of bills within the past two years

2. Have made no more than two payments after the date due within the past 12 months
3. Have not presented a bad check for payment of bills within the past two years
4. Have no detrimental credit information recorded within the past two years
5. Not presently delinquent in the payment of electric bills

If a customer does not meet the foregoing conditions, the utility shall thereafter review the account every 12 months, and when the customer has met these standards, the deposit and accrued interest will be refunded or credited to the customer's bill.

If a customer requests, deposits of \$100 or more may be made by partial payments over a period of at least eight weeks.

### For Residential and Non-residential Security Deposits

Simple interest is credited monthly. The Commission has determined that the interest rate will be adjusted annually to the average of the percentage yields of one-year treasury constant maturities for September, October and November of the previous year. The 2020 rate is 1.66 percent.

For more information about security deposits, visit [firstenergycorp.com/securitydeposit](http://firstenergycorp.com/securitydeposit).

### Seasonal Rate Differentials

If you are a residential or small- to mid-sized non-residential customer and have not chosen an alternate electricity supplier, the rate you pay for generation differs according to season. For

residential and small non-residential customers, summer generation rates are effective from June 1 through September 30, while non-summer generation rates apply to all other periods. For mid-sized non-residential customers, generation rates change every year on March 1, June 1, September 1 and December 1.

### Service Reliability

Potomac Edison continually monitors its distribution circuits using various reliability indices. If a performance issue is detected, Potomac Edison determines the cause, develops a solution and schedules maintenance work based on the severity of the problem. Significant outages affecting Potomac Edison's Maryland customers are identified as a major event day with corresponding dates and the cause of each event.

Customers may request information about the historical reliability of their electric service by calling **800-686-0011**.

### Customer Choice

As an electric consumer in Maryland, you may choose the company that generates or supplies your electricity.

Customer choice allows you to contact other electricity suppliers, compare their prices and services with what you have now and choose the one that best suits your needs.

The suppliers may also contact you by telephone, through the mail or by conducting door-to-door solicitations in an effort to sign you up for their services. If you select a supplier

for your electricity needs, Potomac Edison will continue to provide your monthly billing for the distribution part of your bill. Electricity suppliers have the option of having Potomac Edison provide a consolidated bill which will include both company charges or they may separately bill their portion. Potomac Edison will be the company you call for emergencies or questions concerning your bill.

To shop for a new supplier, you need to know:

**Potomac Edison’s Standard Offer Service (SOS) Pricing Information (for residential customers).**

Once you have this handy, you can compare it to the offers you receive from energy suppliers. This information will help you choose the best supplier for your energy needs. Look for Potomac Edison’s SOS Pricing Information on your electric bill under the “Messages” heading.

**Potomac Edison’s Price for Generation and Transmission (for Non-residential Customers).**

Once you have this handy, you can compare it to the offers you receive from energy suppliers. This information will help you choose the best supplier for your energy needs. Look for Potomac Edison’s price for Generation and Transmission information on your electric bill.

All suppliers must be licensed by the PSC. Make sure to ask for a supplier’s license number, and take time to be clear on the offer. You should review the materials before making any decisions.

For a list of licensed electricity suppliers active in your area, please visit the PSC Electric Choice website at [psc.state.md.us](http://psc.state.md.us) or Potomac Edison’s website at [firstenergycorp.com/MDsupplierlist](http://firstenergycorp.com/MDsupplierlist).

If you do not select an electricity supplier, you will receive electricity from Potomac Edison. Potomac Edison will continue to deliver your electricity, maintain your lines, restore your power if the lights go out and respond to your customer service needs.

**Your Electric Bill**

We read meters for most of our customers every two months and bill all customers every month. We read meters and bill high-usage non-residential customers monthly. We estimate meter readings based on previous usage, adjusted for weather variations. Any difference between the estimate and actual use will be adjusted on your bill with the next actual reading.

A rate schedule (list of charges in your bill) is available upon request or at [firstenergycorp.com/MDtariffs](http://firstenergycorp.com/MDtariffs). For more information about your bill, including bill samples, explanation of terms and monthly bill inserts, visit [firstenergycorp.com/aboutyourbill](http://firstenergycorp.com/aboutyourbill).

**Paying Your Bill**

Residential customers must pay their bill within 20 days of the billing date; non-residential customers (excluding government agencies) have 15 days. A one-time late fee of 1.5 percent, as authorized by the PSC, applies to late payments. We provide several options for bill payment:

## **Bank Account Payments**

Have your payment automatically deducted one time or every month using your checking or savings account.

## **Credit Card Payments**

Have your payment automatically charged to your Visa®, Mastercard® or Discover® credit or debit card one time or every month.

## **Automated Phone Payments**

Call **800-736-3401** to pay your bill quickly and easily over the phone using a credit or debit card.

## **Authorized Payment Locations**

Make your payment at a convenient location near you. Please note that we can verify payments made at authorized locations only. A list of these locations can be found at **[firstenergycorp.com/paymentagencies](http://firstenergycorp.com/paymentagencies)**.

## **Mail**

Send your payment to the address printed on your bill stub.

Only make your payments using one of our established payment options. For a full list, visit **[firstenergycorp.com/paymentoptions](http://firstenergycorp.com/paymentoptions)**.

## **eBill**

We also offer eBill, an electronic billing program, which allows you to view your bills online 24/7. For more information, visit **[firstenergycorp.com/ebill](http://firstenergycorp.com/ebill)**.

## **Additional Payment Plans/Payment Assistance**

### **Bill Extender Plan**

Allows customers receiving social security, supplemental security income, disability payments or government financial aid up to 30 days from the billing date in which to pay. Call **800-686-0011** to enroll.

### **Average Payment Plan**

Levels out your electric bill so you pay your total annual charges in averaged monthly amounts. Call **800-686-0011** to enroll.

### **The Community Energy Fund (CEF)**

A matching funds program to help needy families pay winter energy bills. Donations are matched 50 cents on the dollar, up to program limits.

### **Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP)**

Assists consumers with incomes at or below 175 percent of the federal poverty level in paying electric bills, settling unpaid bills and providing assistance for weatherization of customers' homes. EUSP participants will be placed on the Average Payment Plan, and bill assistance benefits will be applied to future billings on a monthly basis.

### **Utility Service Protection Program (USPP)**

Protects qualifying Maryland Energy Assistance Program participants from service termination during the winter heating season as long as they make monthly payments on current or past-due balances.

## **Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)**

Helps low-income customers pay heating bills.

To apply for EUSP, USPP or MEAP, contact the Maryland Department of Human Services, Office of Home Energy Programs, at **800-332-6347** (TTY: **800-925-4434**).

You can call one of the local administering agencies listed below:

### **Allegany County Human Resources Development Commissions Office of Home Energy Programs**

125 Virginia Avenue  
Cumberland, MD 21502  
Phone: **301-777-8550**

### **Human Services Programs of Carroll County, Inc.**

10 Distillery Drive, Suite G1  
Westminster, MD 21158  
Phone: **410-857-2999**

### **Frederick Community Action Agency**

420 East Patrick Street  
Frederick, MD 21701  
Phone: 301-600-2410

### **Garrett County Community Action Committee, Inc.**

104 E. Center Street  
Oakland, MD 21550  
Phone: **301-334-9431**

### **Community Action Council of Howard County**

9820 Patuxent Woods Drive  
Columbia, MD 21046  
Phone: **410-313-6440**

## **Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Home and Energy Programs**

1301 Piccard Drive  
Rockville, MD 20850  
Phone: **240-777-4450**

## **Washington County Community Action Council**

117 Summit Avenue  
Hagerstown, MD 21740  
Phone: **301-797-4161**

For more information about bill assistance programs or to find out if you may qualify, visit **[firstenergycorp.com/billassist](http://firstenergycorp.com/billassist)** and click on "Search Assistance Programs."

## **Energy Efficiency & Conservation Programs**

Potomac Edison offers a number of energy efficiency programs including programs to help low-income customers. These programs are designed to help customers save both energy and money. We are committed to helping our customers make smart energy choices. For more information, please visit **[energysaveMD.com](http://energysaveMD.com)**.

## **Returned Checks**

There is a \$13 charge for checks returned because of insufficient funds. A customer may have one waiver of this charge in a 12-month period. Additional collection fee charges may apply.

## **Termination Policy Statement**

Termination of electric service is regulated by the PSC and is defined in tariffs that are available for inspection upon request.

Termination notices contain the following information:

- a) The name and account number of the customer whose service is to be terminated.
- b) The address where service is to be terminated.
- c) The reason(s) why service is being terminated.
- d) The date on or after which the proposed termination will occur, if the reasons for termination have not been resolved.
- e) The total amount due and the reconnection charge.
- f) A statement of the customer's rights, including a summary of dispute procedures and the utility's address and phone number.
- g) A statement that it is the customer's responsibility to notify the utility if he or she is unable to make bill payments.
- h) A statement that it is the customer's responsibility to notify the utility that the occupant of the building is elderly, handicapped, ill, on life-support equipment or has an existing condition that would make termination of service a threat to life, health or safety. In addition, the statement should include a brief explanation of the special provisions for that person and procedures for notifying the company.

Customers receiving seven-day termination notices also will receive information on how service was secured, the approximate time the service was used and why we determined termination is warranted.

An alternate payment plan may be negotiated with a residential customer in an attempt to avoid termination of their service and to retire all outstanding charges with the utility. If an alternate payment plan cannot be arranged, the utility must promptly notify the customer.

### **Termination without Prior Notice**

Your electric service may be terminated immediately for any of the following reasons:

1. There is a condition on your premises that the company considers hazardous.
2. Your use of equipment adversely affects the company's equipment or service to others.
3. You have tampered with company equipment.
4. You are using electric service, including diversion of electricity from the meter, without authorization.
5. A public authority having jurisdiction requests termination.

### **Termination with Seven-Day Notice**

Your electric service may be terminated after you've received a seven-day notice for any of the following reasons:

1. Application was made under a fictitious name.
2. Material facts were not disclosed or were misrepresented on the application.
3. Application was made in the name of a person who does not live on the premises to be served, without disclosure of the person's actual address.
4. Application was made in the name of a third party who did not give bona fide authorization.



5. Application was made by an individual assisting the occupant of the building in avoiding payment of outstanding electric bills.
6. Application was made for a dwelling by one of two or more co-occupants who previously had an account for the dwelling and failed to pay or make arrangements to pay the bill or undisputed portion of the disputed bill.
7. Application was made for a dwelling by co-occupants and one of the co-occupants failed to pay, or make arrangements to pay, the outstanding bill or undisputed portion of the disputed bill at a prior dwelling.

### **Termination with 14-Day Notice**

Your electric service may be terminated after you've received a 14-day notice for any of the following reasons:

1. Nonpayment of bills.
2. Denying company personnel reasonable access to company equipment on your premises.
3. Failure to comply with agreements you've made with the company.
4. Violating the company's rules and regulations or those of the Commission.
5. Failure to pay a requested deposit.
6. Failure to furnish service, equipment, permits, certificates or rights-of-way as specified by the company as a condition for obtaining service. Or, if the equipment or permissions are withdrawn or terminated.

### **Termination in Winter**

We will not terminate service to residential customers for nonpayment of bills between November 1 and the following March 31, unless we first file an affidavit with the Commission at least 24 hours before the termination, stating that the termination doesn't threaten the life or health of the occupants. We will make two attempts on two separate days to contact customers using these methods:

1. Calling during working hours or after 6 p.m. If you have no telephone, we will make two attempts to visit your home.
2. Visiting your home to leave with you, or a responsible person age 18 or older, a copy of the termination notice, a Customer Rights Pamphlet, or a brochure explaining winter terminations, including the USPP.
3. Leaving a copy of the termination notice and one of the above-described pamphlets, if no one is home.

In addition, we will not terminate your service if at 6 a.m. on any given day the temperature is forecasted not to exceed 32 degrees Fahrenheit during any day within a 72-hour period.

### **Termination in Summer**

In addition, we will not terminate your service if at 6 a.m. on any given day the temperature is forecasted to exceed 94 degrees Fahrenheit during any day within a 72-hour period.

### **Third-Party Notice**

All customers, particularly those who are ill, incapacitated, handicapped, elderly or away from home, can designate a person or organization to receive a copy of any termination notice. The third party is not responsible or obligated to pay the customer's bill.

### **Life Support and Special Cases**

If you or someone in your home is seriously ill or on life-support equipment, it is your responsibility to notify Potomac Edison. Your service will not be terminated for an initial period of up to 30 days beyond the scheduled termination date, provided you notify the company within 14 days of receiving the notice or before the scheduled termination date, whichever comes first.

Termination will not be delayed unless you provide a written certificate from a licensed physician no later than the scheduled termination date. It must contain the name and address of the ill person and the physician, a statement that the ill person is the customer or an occupant of the premises, the need for life-support equipment, and a statement that termination will aggravate the illness or prevent use of the equipment.

You must also enter into an agreement with the company for payment of unpaid bills. Certification of a medical condition may be renewed by providing another certificate.

### **Reconnection of Service**

We will reconnect your service in a reasonable amount of time after conditions causing the disconnection have been corrected or delinquencies have been paid. The charge for reconnecting service at your electric meter is \$16 during regular working hours. We will reconnect service after regular working hours for \$80 in emergency situations such as customers who require life-support equipment but have no battery backup. All reconnect fees are required to be paid prior to the reconnection of service. The charge for USPP participants will be in accordance with the program. If reconnection is necessary somewhere other than at the meter, company costs, payable in advance, will be charged. In addition, the customer may be required to post a new or additional security deposit to have service restored. We require access to the property when we reconnect. There will be no reconnection charge if it becomes necessary to temporarily curtail service in the event of unavoidable shortages or an interruption in the company's sources of supply or for repairs to equipment.

## Call Before You Dig

To prevent serious injury and avoid damaging underground utility facilities, the law requires that you call the national “Call Before You Dig” number to check on the location of any underground utilities before you start digging. Contact with underground utility lines can be as hazardous as contact with overhead utility lines. Just dial 811.



For more information, visit [call811.com](http://call811.com).

**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

**PotomacEdison**<sup>®</sup>  
*A FirstEnergy Company*

Call us at 800-686-0011 or  
visit [firstenergycorp.com](http://firstenergycorp.com).