

R12-9 UNIFORM BILLING PROCEDURE

(a) Declaration of Policy. -- No 'penalties,' 'discounts' or 'net-and-gross' rate differentials shall be imposed upon North Carolina consumers for regulated services offered by public utilities subject to the jurisdiction of this Commission, for the reason that those rate differentials are confusing and misleading, and the monthly rates of 5% or 10% heretofore charged are arbitrary and unreasonable. This Commission recognizes, however, that there are interest, finance, or service costs directly attributable to customers who excessively delay payment of utility bills, and considers that it is appropriate for a utility to attempt to recoup a portion of those costs by applying such interest, finance or service charges as may be reasonable and lawful.

(b) Billing Date. -- All bills for utility services are due and payable as of the billing date, or if not received by said billing date, upon receipt. The billing date shall be printed on the bill and the bill shall be placed, postage prepaid, in the U.S. Mail (or if the mail is not used, delivered to the customer) prior to or no later than the billing date.

(c) Past Due or Delinquent Bills. -- The past due or delinquent date is the first date upon which the utility may initiate disconnect proceeding under N.C.U.C. Rule R12-8. The past due or delinquent date shall be disclosed on the bill and shall be not less than fifteen (15) days after the billing date. In the event the utility fails to place the bill in the mail (or deliver it as in paragraph (b) above) prior to or on said billing date, the consumer shall have the right to require that the utility adjust the billing date by the number of days by which the postmark (or delivery as in paragraph (b) above) exceeds the original billing date.

(d) Finance charges. -- No interest, finance, or service charge for the extension of credit shall be imposed upon the consumer or creditor if the account is paid within twenty-five (25) days from the billing date. No utility shall apply a late payment, interest, or finance charge to the balance in arrears at the rate of more than 1% per month. The bill shall clearly state the interest rate or the amount that would be due if not paid within the allowed amount of time, including the interest, finance or service charge. All utilities which are required to file tariffs and which apply an interest, finance, or service charge must file tariff provisions to that effect. All utilities must apply the appropriate interest, finance, or service charge on a uniform basis.

(e) Acceleration of Past Due or Delinquent Date in Rare Cases and with Good Cause -- If a utility with good cause determines that the credit rating of a customer has been jeopardized by unusually extensive use of a metered or toll service, such as long distance telephone service, or by other factors which indicate the likelihood that the customer cannot pay his outstanding bill, and for which the customer's deposit, if there be one, does not furnish adequate security, the utility may accelerate the past due or delinquent date and proceed with disconnect or toll denial procedures under N.C.U.C. Rule R12-8 and R12-17; provided, however, that it must state to the customer in writing its cause for so doing and file a copy of said statement with the Commission.

(NCUC Docket No. M-100, Sub 39, 11/24/72; NCUC Docket No. M-100, Sub 39, 10/19/73; NCUC Docket No. P-100, Sub 72, 5/23/96; P-100, Sub 140, 4/3/00; 4/5/00; NCUC Docket No. P-100, Sub 72b, 01/02/04; P-100, Sub 140a, 08/16/07.)