

R24-07**DISCONNECTION; BILLING PROCEDURE**

- (a) Any payment to the provider shall be applied first to the rent owed and then to charges for natural gas service, unless otherwise designated by the lessee.
- (b) No charge for connection or disconnection or late fee or deposit paid by the provider to the supplier shall be allowed, and no provider may terminate a lease for nonpayment of natural gas service.
- (c) No provider may disconnect or request the supplier to disconnect natural gas service for the lessee's nonpayment of a bill.
- (d) Bills shall be rendered at least monthly.
- (e) The date after which a bill for natural gas service is due (the past-due date) shall be disclosed on the bill and shall not be less than twenty-five (25) days after the bill is mailed or otherwise delivered to the lessee.
- (f) A provider shall not bill for or attempt to collect for excess usage resulting from a meter malfunction or other natural gas condition in appliances such as water heaters, HVAC systems, or ranges furnished by the provider to the lessee, when the malfunction is not known to the lessee or when the malfunction has been reported to the provider.
- (g) Every provider shall provide to each lessee at the time the lease agreement is signed, and shall maintain in its business office, in public view, near the place where payments are received, the following:
- (1) A copy of the rates, rules, and regulations of the provider applicable to the premises served from that office, with respect to natural gas service;
 - (2) A copy of these rules and regulations (Chapter 24); and
 - (3) A statement advising lessees that they should first contact the provider's office with any questions they may have regarding bills or complaints about service, and that in cases of dispute, they may contact the Commission either by calling the Public Staff - North Carolina Utilities Commission, Consumer Services Division, at (866) 380-9816 (toll-free) or (919) 733-9277, or by appearing in person or writing to the Public Staff - North Carolina Utilities Commission, Consumer Services Division, 4326 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4300.
- (h) Each provider shall adopt a means of informing its lessees initially and on an annual basis as to the provider's method of allocating bills to the individual lessees and its administrative fee, returned check charge, and late fee, if any. A copy of the supplier's current schedule of charges shall also be included in these disclosures.
- (i) Every provider shall promptly notify the Commission in writing of any change in the information required in Rule R24-4(a), except for changes in the rates and charges of the supplier (Rule R24-4(a)(8)).
- (j) If a provider anticipates that it will not pay a supplier's bill on time, or if the provider receives notice from the supplier of pending disconnection, whichever comes first, the provider must within 24 hours provide written notice to the Commission and all of the provider's affected lessees of the anticipated nonpayment or disconnection notice. A provider may not abandon or cease providing natural gas service to its lessees without advance permission from the Commission.

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