



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

Guidance for Residential Customers Struggling with Utility Bills *Information on COVID-19 Payment Program*

On March 12, 2020, Connecticut's Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA) issued an [Order](#) to all state-regulated gas, electric, and water public service companies to cease residential service terminations for reasons of nonpayment as a protective measure during the Public Health and Civil Preparedness Emergency declared by Governor Lamont on March 10, 2020.

On April 29, 2020, PURA issued an [Interim Decision](#) directing all state-regulated gas, electric, and water public service companies to offer flexible payment plans, *i.e.* the COVID-19 Payment Program, to assist customers with addressing utility bill arrearages that may accumulate during the pandemic.

Please note that the Residential Shut-Off Moratorium is scheduled to end for the *majority* of customers on **September 9, 2020**.¹ In preparation, PURA strongly encourages residential customers to familiarize themselves with the details of the COVID-19 Payment Program and to call their utility to enroll **no later than November 1, 2020**, if the customer would benefit from a flexible payment arrangement.

Public service utility companies are offering payment plans that:

- Are available to *any* customer requesting financial assistance – utilities are prohibited from requiring a demonstration of financial need prior to enrolling a customer in the COVID-19 Payment Program;
- Require no initial or down payment;
- Have durations of up to twenty-four (24) months;
- Waive any fees or interest in the calculation of the monthly payment amount; and
- Facilitate the repayment of the past due balances in addition to the customer's current monthly bill.

Although the Residential Shut-Off Moratorium is scheduled to end on September 9, customers who are enrolled in a COVID-19 Payment Program and are current with their payment terms remain exempt from service termination for reasons of nonpayment, even after the Shut-Off Moratorium is lifted.

Importantly, the COVID-19 Payment Program does not replace existing financial hardship or assistance programs that continue to be available to limited-income customers. Customers experiencing financial difficulties should contact their utility directly and inquire whether they are eligible for "hardship protections and programs."

Please visit PURA's [COVID Actions page](#) for more information on efforts taken in response to the current pandemic.

¹ The Shut-Off Moratorium will continue for financial hardship customers through October 31, 2020. Beginning November 1 through May 1, the statutory Winter Protection Plan protects against service termination for financial hardship customers of electric and natural gas utilities (See Conn. Gen. Stat. § 16-262c(b)(1) for more information on the Winter Protection Plan).