

Docket U-100523 -- Gas Draft Rules

NEW SECTION

WAC 480-90-XXX Electronic information. With the prior consent of the customer or applicant, a company may provide bills, notices of tariff revisions, or bill inserts including inserts containing information required to be provided to customers or applicants by statute, rule, or commission order by electronic means instead of the use of paper copies sent by U.S. Mail.

(1) All documents provided electronically must meet the requirements for format, due dates, calculation of due dates, minimum timeframes, and any other requirements specified within WAC 480-90. Electronic documents will be treated the same as documents that are mailed within the state of Washington for the purposes of calculating due dates and minimum timeframes.

(2) **Verification of consent.** The company must obtain prior written or electronic consent to provide prescribed documents electronically (consent letter). The consent letter must not be combined on the same document or on the same screen or web page with any other information. The company must retain the consent letter as a permanent part of the customer's account records to serve as verification of the customer's authorization to receive selected documents electronically. The documentation of the consent must be made available to the customer and to the commission upon request at no charge. The consent letter must confirm the following information from the customer:

(a) The customer's name, telephone number, address, and e-mail address;

(b) The decision to change;

(c) The customer understands that signing the consent letter allows the company to provide bills, notices of tariff revisions, or bill inserts including inserts containing information required to be provided to customers or applicants by statute, rule, or commission order by electronic means instead of the use of paper copies sent by U.S. Mail;

(d) The company will provide upon request, a paper copy of any document sent electronically at no additional charge. The customer may also request to revert to paper delivery at no additional charge.

(3) Electronic notices for proposed tariff changes of increased rates or restriction of access to services, and public hearings will be marked URGENT NOTICE in the subject line.

(4) The following documents may not be provided solely by electronic means:

(a) Notices of disconnection; and

(b) Information regarding the winter low-income payment program, including written copies of any extended payment plans under the winter low-income payment program.

AMEND

WAC 480-90-103 Information to consumers.

(3) The utility must provide to each applicant relevant rate information and a brochure that explains the rights and responsibilities of a utility customer. The brochure must include, at a minimum, information about the utility's regular business hours, the utility's mailing address, the utility's toll-free number, the twenty-four hour emergency number(s), and an explanation of the utility's processes to establish credit, deposits, billing, delinquent accounts, disconnection of service initiated by the utility, cancellation of service by the customer, the dispute resolution process, and the commission's informal complaint procedures to be followed if the customer remains dissatisfied with the utility's dispute process. The utility may provide this information in an electronic format consistent with provisions in this chapter governing the use of electronic information.

AMEND

WAC 480-90-178 Billing requirement and payment date.

(4) With the consent of the customer, a company may provide regular billings in electronic form if the bill meets all the requirements for the use of electronic information in this chapter. The company must maintain a permanent record of the customer's request, and the customer may change from electronic to printed billing upon request. The company must complete the change within two billing cycles of the request.

AMEND

WAC 480-90-194 Publication of proposed tariff changes to increase charges or restrict access to services. Each electric utility offering service under tariff must publish or provide electronically all proposed changes to its tariff for at least thirty days, as required by RCW 80.28.060. The utility may provide this information in an electronic format consistent with provisions in this chapter governing the use of electronic information.

(1) Thirty-day notice to individual customers. To comply under this method, the utility must, at least thirty days before the stated effective date of the proposed change, mail or provide electronically the posting to each customer that would be affected by the proposed change. The posting must include information listed in subsection (4) of this section. The utility may provide this information in an electronic format consistent with provisions in this chapter governing the use of electronic information.

(3) Reduced publication with shortened notice to individual customers. To comply under this method, the utility must:

(a) Mail or provide electronically the posting to each customer that would be affected by the proposed change at least fifteen days before the stated effective date of the proposed change; The utility may provide this information in an electronic format consistent with provisions in this chapter governing the use of electronic information.