

Attachment B

Customer Notice Rule Drafts 480-090-193, 480-100-193, 480-120-043, 480-120-X15, 480-121-X04, 480-80-125 U-991301

January 26, 2001

480-090-193 Gas customer notification requirements.

This rule sets out requirements in specific circumstances for notices that utilities must provide to customers when utilities ask for certain types of approval from the commission. This rule does not contain the notice requirements for other proposals set for hearing to increase any rate or charge, or to establish a banded tariff that includes an increased maximum rate (see WAC 480-80-125), or for utilities that file an application to merge or consolidate any franchises, property, or facilities with any other company (see WAC 480-143-210).

A utility may request an exemption from this rule in accordance with WAC 480-90-193.

(1) Customer notice before commission action.

(a) Amount of prior notice. Except as provided in section 2, each affected customer must receive at least _____ days' [*Staff note: the amount of prior notice will be a topic for discussion at the workshop.*] notice before the requested effective date when a utility proposes [see exceptions in subsection (2)] to:

(i) Increase recurring monthly rates;

(ii) Restrict access to services (e.g., discontinue a service, or limit access to service by imposing a new usage level on existing service);

(b) Content of notice for increases in recurring monthly rates. Each customer notice must include, at a minimum;

(i) The date the notice is issued;

(ii) The company's name and address;

(iii) A brief explanation of the reason(s) the utility has requested the rate change (e.g., increase in labor costs, recovery of new plant investment, and increased office expenses, such as, postage and customer billing);

(iv) A comparison of current and proposed rates by service;

(v) An example showing the monthly increase of the average customer's bill based on the proposed rates (e.g., "Based on the proposed rates, a typical gas customer using an average of 80 therms per month would see an average monthly increase of \$2.74.");

(vi) When the rates will be billed (i.e., monthly or bi-monthly);

(vii) The requested effective date and, if different, the implementation date;

(viii) A statement that the commission has the authority to set final rates that vary from the utility's request, and may be either higher or lower depending on the results of the investigation;

(ix) A description of how customers may contact the utility if they have specific questions or need additional information about the proposal; and

(x) Public involvement language. A utility may choose from (1) commission-suggested language, or (2) utility-developed language.

(1) Commission-suggested language:

If you would like to comment on this proposal, it is important for you to do so now. Comments must be submitted in writing or presented in person at the commission's open public meeting. If you have questions or you would like to be added to the mailing list for this case, you may contact the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission at P.O. Box 47250, Olympia, WA 98504-7250; 1-800-562-6150; comments@wutc.wa.gov; or 360-664-3604(fax); or

(2) Utility-developed language must include the commission's mailing address and toll-free number (1-800-562-6150), and a brief explanation:

(I) How to participate in the commission's process by mailing or faxing a letter, or submitting an e-mail (comments@wutc.wa.gov); and

(II) How to contact the commission for process questions or to be notified of the scheduled open meeting at which the proposal will be considered by the commission.

(c) Methods of notice permitted. Methods include: bill insert, bill message, printing on back of the billing envelope, or a separate mailing to all affected customers.

(2) Purchase Gas Cost Adjustment (PGA). Notice is required before and after final commission disposition. Notice before commission disposition is to educate customers of a potential increase in natural gas prices.

(a) Prior PGA Notice. The notice should clearly define what a PGA is and explain how it works; the range of the estimated percentage of impact to customers and a utility contact phone number for additional information.

(b) Method permitted: a newsletter, bill insert, bill message, or separate mailing to customers.

(c) Post notice. Customer notice is also required after final commission disposition [see section (3) Customer notice after final commission disposition of the rule for content and method permitted.]

(3) Customer notice after final commission disposition (post notice). Utilities should note that this section covers items from the commission's open public meeting agenda including the "no action" agenda.

(a) When post notice is to be provided. Each affected customer must receive notice on the first bill after final commission disposition when a utility increases rates for:

(i) Non-recurring charges (e.g., late payment fees, NSF fees, a one-time charge);

(ii) Local taxes; or

(iii) Purchase gas cost adjustment (for increase and decrease in rates).

(b) Content of notice. At a minimum, notice after final commission disposition must include the effective date, a clear description of changes to rates or services and a utility contact number where customers may seek additional information.

(c) Post notice methods. Methods of notice permitted include: bill insert, bill message, printing on back of the billing envelope, or a separate mailing to all affected customers.

(4) Commission assistance on customer notice. A utility may request the commission's designated public affairs officer to:

(a) Assist with customer notice questions;

(b) Review draft customer notice language; and

(c) Offer suggestions on draft notice for review, at least two working days before the planned printing date.

(5) Final copy of the customer notice. A copy of the final customer notification must be mailed to the commission's designated public affairs officer at the same time the notice is issued to the affected customers.

(6) Other customer notice. The commission may require notification to customers other than described in this rule when the commission determines that additional customer education is needed.

480-100-193 Electric customer notification requirements.

This rule sets out requirements in specific circumstances for notices that utilities must provide to customers when utilities ask for certain types of approval from the commission. This rule does not contain the notice requirements for other proposals set for hearing to increase any rate or charge, or to establish a banded tariff that includes an increased maximum rate (see WAC 480-80-125), or for utilities that file an application to merge or consolidate any franchises, property, or facilities with any other company (see WAC 480-143-210).

A utility may request an exemption from this rule in accordance with WAC 480-100-193.

(1) Customer notice before commission action.

(a) Amount of prior notice. Except as provided in section 2, each affected customer must receive at least _____ days' [*Staff note: the amount of prior notice will be a topic for discussion at the workshop.*] notice before the requested effective date when a utility proposes [see exceptions in subsection (2)] to:

(i) Increase recurring monthly rates;

(ii) Restrict access to services (e.g., discontinue a service, or limit access to service by imposing a new usage level on existing service);

(b) Content of notice for increases in recurring monthly rates. Each customer notice must include, at a minimum;

(i) The date the notice is issued;

(ii) The company's name and address;

(iii) A brief explanation of the reason(s) the utility has requested the rate change (e.g., increase in labor costs, recovery of new plant investment, and increased office expenses, such as, postage and customer billing);

(iv) A comparison of current and proposed rates by service;

(v) An example showing the monthly increase of the average customer's bill based on the proposed rates (e.g., "Based on the proposed rates, a typical electric-heat customer using an average of 1,500 kWhs per month would see an average monthly increase of \$10.38.");

(vi) When the rates will be billed (i.e., monthly or bi-monthly);

(vii) The requested effective date and, if different, the implementation date;

(viii) A statement that the commission has the authority to set final rates that vary from the utility's request, and may be either higher or lower depending on the results of the investigation;

(ix) A description of how customers may contact the utility if they have specific questions or need additional information about the proposal; and

(x) Public involvement language. A utility may choose from (1) commission-suggested language, or (2) utility-developed language.

(1) Commission-suggested language:

If you would like to comment on this proposal, it is important for you to do so now. Comments must be submitted in writing or presented in person at the commission's open public meeting. If you have questions or you would like to be

added to the mailing list for this case, you may contact the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission at P.O. Box 47250, Olympia, WA 98504-7250; 1-800-562-6150; comments@wutc.wa.gov; or 360-664-3604(fax); or

(2) Utility-developed language must include the commission's mailing address and toll-free number (1-800-562-6150), and a brief explanation:

(I) How to participate in the commission's process by mailing or faxing a letter, or submitting an e-mail (comments@wutc.wa.gov); and

(II) How to contact the commission for process questions or to be notified of the scheduled open meeting at which the proposal will be considered by the commission.

(c) Methods of notice permitted. Methods include: bill insert, bill message, printing on back of the billing envelope, or a separate mailing to all affected customers.

(2) Customer notice after final commission disposition (post notice). Utilities should note that this section covers items from the commission's open public meeting agenda including the "no action" agenda.

(a) When post notice is to be provided. Each affected customer must receive notice on the first bill after final commission disposition when a utility increases rates for:

- (i) Non-recurring charges (e.g., late payment fees, NSF fees, a one-time charge);
- (ii) Local taxes; or
- (iii) Conservation program rates.

(b) Content of notice. At a minimum, notice after final commission disposition must include the effective date, a clear description of changes to rates or services and a utility contact number where customers may seek additional information.

(c) Post notice methods. Methods of notice permitted include: bill insert, bill message, printing on back of the billing envelope, or a separate mailing to all affected customers.

(3) Commission assistance on customer notice. A utility may request the commission's designated public affairs officer to:

- (d) Assist with customer notice questions;
- (e) Review draft customer notice language; and

(c) Offer suggestions on draft notice for review. If a utility would like assistance, it should submit a draft notice for review at least two working days before the planned printing date.

(4) Final copy of the customer notice. A copy of the final customer notification must be mailed to the commission's designated public affairs officer at the same time the notice is issued to the affected customers.

(5) Other customer notice. The commission may require notification to customers other than described in this rule when the commission determines that additional customer education is needed.

WAC 480-120-043 Customer notification – non-competitive telecommunications company.

This rule sets out requirements in specific circumstances for notices that companies must provide to customers when companies ask for certain types of approval from the commission. This rule does not contain the notice requirements for other proposals set for hearing to increase any rate or charge, or to establish a banded tariff that includes an increased maximum rate (see WAC 480-80-125), or for companies that file an application to merge or consolidate any franchises, property, or facilities with any other company (see WAC 480-143-210).

A company may request an exemption from this rule in accordance with WAC 480-120-015.

(1) Customer notice before commission action.

(a) Amount of prior notice. Except as provided in section 2, each affected customer must receive at least _____ days' [*Staff note: the amount of prior notice will be a topic for discussion at the workshop.*] notice before the requested effective date when a company proposes [see exceptions in subsection (2)] to:

(i) Increase recurring monthly rates;

(ii) Restrict access to services (e.g., discontinue a service, or limit access to service by imposing a new usage level on existing services);

(b) Content of notice for increases in recurring monthly rates. Each customer notice must include, at a minimum;

(i) The date the notice is issued;

(ii) The company's name and address;

(iii) A brief explanation of the reason(s) the company has requested the rate change (e.g., increase in labor costs, recovery of new plant investment, and increased office expenses, such as, postage and customer billing);

(iv) A comparison of current and proposed rates by service;

(v) When the rates will be billed (i.e., monthly or bi-monthly);

(vi) The requested effective date and, if different, the implementation date;

(vii) A statement that the commission has the authority to set final rates that vary from the utility's request, and may be either higher or lower depending on the results of the investigation;

(viii) A description of how customers may contact the company if they have specific questions or need additional information about the proposal; and

(x) Public involvement language. A company may choose from (1) commission-suggested language, or (2) company-developed language.

(1) Commission-suggested language:

If you would like to comment on this proposal, it is important for you to do so now. Comments must be submitted in writing or presented in person at the commission's open public meeting. If you have questions or you would like to be added to the mailing list for this case, you may contact the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission at P.O. Box 47250, Olympia, WA 98504-7250; 1-800-562-6150; comments@wutc.wa.gov; or 360-664-3604(fax); or

(2) Company-developed language must include the commission's mailing address and toll-free number (1-800-562-6150), and a brief explanation:

(I) How to participate in the commission's process by mailing or faxing a letter, or submitting an e-mail (comments@wutc.wa.gov); and

(II) How to contact the commission for process questions or to be notified of the scheduled open meeting at which the proposal will be considered by the commission.

(c) Methods of notice permitted. Methods include: bill insert, bill message, printing on back of the billing envelope, or a separate mailing to all affected customers.

(2) Customer notice after final commission disposition (post notice). Companies should note that this section covers items from the commission's open public meeting agenda including the "no action" agenda.

(a) When post notice is to be provided. Each affected customer must receive notice on the first bill after final commission disposition when a company increases rates for:

(i) Non-recurring charges (e.g., late payment fees, NSF fees, a one-time charge);

(ii) Local taxes; or

(iii) Grandfather services.

(b) Content of notice. At a minimum, notice after final commission disposition must include the effective date, a clear description of changes to rates or services and a company contact number where customers may seek additional information.

(c) Post notice methods. Methods of notice permitted include: newsletter, bill insert, bill message, printing on back of the billing envelope, or a separate mailing to all affected customers.

(4) Commission assistance on customer notice. A company may request the commission's designated public affairs officer to:

(f) Assist with customer notice questions;

(g) Review draft customer notice language; and

(c) Offer suggestions on draft customer notice. If a company would like assistance, it should submit a draft notice for review at least two working days before the planned printing date.

(5) Final copy of the customer notice. A copy of the final customer notification must be mailed to the commission's designated public affairs officer at the same time the notice is issued to the affected customers.

(6) Other customer notice. The commission may require notification to customers other than described in this rule when the commission determines that additional customer education is needed.

WAC 480-120-X15 Customer notification – competitively classified telecommunications companies or services.

This rule sets out requirements in specific circumstances for notices that companies must provide to customers when services are provided under price list.

A company may request an exemption from this rule in accordance with WAC 480-120-015.

(1) Customer notice before the effective date of price list change for competitively classified companies or competitively classified services.

(a) Amount of prior notice. Each affected customer must receive at least ten days' notice before the requested effective date when a company proposes to increase rates by a price list filing.

(b) Content of notice. Each customer notice must include, at a minimum;

(i) The effective date;

(ii) A clear description of changes to rates or services; and

(iii) A company contact number where customers can seek additional information.

(c) Methods of notice permitted. Methods include: bill insert, bill message, printing on back of the billing envelope, or a separate mailing (e.g., postcard, letter).

(2) Commission assistance on customer notice. A company may request the commission's designated public affairs officer to:

(h) Assist with customer notice questions;

(i) Review draft customer notice language; and

(j) Offer suggestions on draft customer notice language. If a company would like assistance, it should submit a draft notice for review at least two working days before the planned printing date.

(3) Alternative form of notice permitted without prior approval. As an alternative to the customer notice required by this rule, a company may propose another form of customer notice. Provided, however, that any such notice must be approved by the commission's designated public affairs officer in advance.

(4) Final copy of the customer notice. A copy of the final customer notification must be mailed to the commission's designated public affairs officer at the same time the notice is issued to the affected customers.

(5) Other customer notice. The commission may require notification to customers other than described in this rule when the commission determines that additional customer education is needed.

WAC 480-121-X04 Customer notice – petition for competitive classification of a service.

Customer notice in this rule only applies to petitions for competitive classification acted on by the commission at its public open meeting. Customer notice requirements for petitions set for hearing are described in WAC 480-80-125.

(1) Customer notice before commission action on petition for classification.

(a) Amount of prior notice. When a company petitions for competitive classification of a telecommunications service(s), each affected customer must receive at least _____ days' *[Staff note: the amount of prior notice will be a topic for discussion at the workshop.]* notice before the requested effective date.

(b) Content of notice. Each customer notice must include, at a minimum;

- (i) The date the notice is issued;
- (ii) The company's name and address;
- (iii) A clear explanation of the proposal to give customers the basis for understanding the proposal and the potential impact of the change;
- (iv) The following language:

(Company name) has filed for approval to market (name or service(s)) as a competitive service. (Company name) believes that there are other service providers, in your location, that could provide the same or similar services to you. If this is approved, our company would have pricing flexibility to react to market conditions and the ability to change rates, terms or conditions upon ten days' notice to affected customers and the commission. The commission will determine if there is effective competition during its investigation. This proposal does not change any rates for our service.;

(v) A description of how the customers may contact the company if they have specific questions or need additional information about the proposal; and

(vi) The following public involvement language:

All comments to the Commission must be submitted in writing or presented at the public meeting on this case. If you have questions or you would like to be added to the mailing list for this case, you may contact the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission at P.O. Box 47250, Olympia, WA 98504-7250; 1-800-562-6150' comments@wutc.wa.gov; or 360-664-3604(fax).

(c) Methods of notice permitted: Bill insert, bill message, printing on back of the billing envelope, or a separate mailing (e.g., postcard, letter) to all affected customers.

(2) Commission assistance on customer notice. A company may request the commission's designated public affairs officer to:

- (k) Assist with customer notice questions;
- (l) Review draft customer notice language; and

(c) Offer suggestions on draft customer notice language. If a company would like assistance, it should submit a draft notice for review at least two working days before the planned printing date.

(5) Final copy of the customer notice. A copy of the final customer notification must be mailed to the commission's designated public affairs officer at the same time the notice is issued to the affected customers.

(6) Other customer notice. The commission may require notification to customers other than described in this rule when the commission determines that additional customer education is needed.

WAC 480-80-125 Formal hearing customer notice.

(1) Formal hearing customer notice. After a commission decision to institute an investigation or set a case for a formal hearing a company must provide notice to each affected customer at least thirty days before the scheduled public hearing.

- (a) Who must receive notice. At a minimum, a company must notify:
 - (i) Each affected customer;
 - (ii) Newspaper(s), radio station(s) and television station(s) located in the utilities' service territory; and
 - (iii) The designated public affairs officer of the commission.
- (b) Content of notice. Each customer notice must include, at a minimum:
 - (i) The date the notice is issued;
 - (ii) The company's name and address;
 - (iii) A brief explanation of the reason(s) the company has requested the rate change (e.g., increase in labor costs, recovery of new plant investment, and increased office expenses, such as, postage and customer billing.);
 - (iv) A comparison of current and proposed rates by service;
 - (v) An example showing the monthly increase using an average customer's bill based on the proposed rates;
 - (vi) When the rates will be billed (e.g., monthly or bi-monthly);
 - (vii) The requested effective date and, if different, the implementation date;
 - (viii) A statement that the commission has the authority to set final rates that may vary from the company's request, and may be either higher or lower depending on the results of the investigation;
 - (ix) A description of how customers contact the company if they have specific questions or need additional information about the proposal;
 - (x) A statement that a lawyer has been appointed to represent the public from the Attorney General's Public Counsel Division that includes Public Counsel's phone number (206-464-6907) and website address (www.wa.gov/ago/utility).
 - (xi) Public involvement language. A company may chose from (1) commission-suggested language, or (2) company-developed language.

(1) Commission-suggested language: If you would like to comment on this proposal, it is important for you to do so now. All written comments will be formally included in the hearing process as an exhibit in the case. Public hearing(s) have been scheduled to take public testimony on (date), (time), and (location). If you have questions or you would like to be added to the mailing list for this case, you may contact the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission at P.O. Box 47250, Olympia, WA 98504-7250; 1-800-562-6150; comments@wutc.wa.gov; or 360-664-3604(fax). If you would like to comment on this proposal, it is important for you to do so now. All written comments will be formally included in the hearing process as an exhibit in the case.

(2) Company-developed language must include the commission's mailing address and toll-free number (1-800-562-6150), and a brief explanation:

- (I) How to participate in the commission's process by mailing or faxing a letter, or submitting an e-mail (comments@wutc.wa.gov);
- (II) How to contact the commission for process questions; and
- (III) The date, time and location of the public hearing.

(c) Methods of notice permitted include: bill insert, bill message, printing on back of the billing envelope, or a separate mailing to all affected customers.

(2) Commission assistance on customer notice. A company may request the commission's designated public affairs officer to:

- (a) Assist with customer notice questions;
- (b) Review draft customer notice language; and
- (c) Offer suggestions on draft customer notice language. If a company would like assistance, it should submit a draft notice for review, at least two working days before the planned printing date.

(3) Final copy of the customer notice. A copy of the final customer notification must be mailed to the commission's designated public affairs officer at the same time the notice is issued to the affected customers.

(4) Other customer notice. The commission may require notification to customers other than described in this rule when the commission determines that additional customer education is needed.