

Proposed New Rules
Chapter 480-120
UT-990146
WAC 480-120-X14, X15

July 21, 2000 - draft 2

WAC 480-120-X14 Customer notification - non-competitive telecommunications company.

A company must notify its customers at least once, either prior to or after commission action, depending on the type of filing. If a company knows that a filing will be suspended, a company may notify customers during the suspension period as long as all customers receive at least thirty days' notice prior to commission action.

(1) Customer notice prior to commission action:

(a) Each affected customer must receive at least thirty days' notice prior to the requested effective date when a company proposes to:

- (i) Increase recurring monthly rates;
- (ii) File a general rate case; (Formal Hearing process, WAC 480-80-125)
- (iii) Restrict access to services (e.g., discontinuing a service, limit access to service by imposing a new usage level on existing services); or
- (iv) Change the ownership or control of the operating company (see WAC 480-143-210 for content of notice).

(b) At a minimum, a company must notify:

- (i) Each customer that will be affected by the company's proposal; and
- (ii) The public affairs section of the commission.

(c) Content of notice for rate change. Each customer notice must include, at a minimum:

- (i) The date the notice is issued;
- (ii) The company name and address;
- (iii) A clear explanation of the reasons for the rate change, using examples as needed, to give customers the basis for understanding the rate proposal and the impact of the change;
- (iv) A comparison of current and proposed rates by service;
- (v) Requested effective or implementation date, or both;
- (vi) An explanation 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;
- (vii) A description of how and where customers may contact the company if they have specific questions or need additional information about the proposal; and
- (viii) Public involvement language. A company may chose from (A) commission-suggested language, or (B) company-developed language to address (I) and (II).

(A) Commission-suggested language:

"All comments to the commission must be submitted in writing or presented at the commission's public meeting. If you have questions about the rate making

process, you may contact the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission at the following address:

Secretary, Washington Utilities & Transportation Commission
P.O. Box 47250,
Olympia, WA 98504-7250
1-800-562-6150 (toll free)
comments@wutc.wa.gov

If you would like to be added to the commission's mailing list for notification of the commission's open public meeting date regarding this issue, please call 1-800-562-6150, select option two and leave your name, complete mailing address including your company's name and a description of the proposal you are interested in;" or

(B) Company-developed language providing:

(I) A brief explanation how to participate in the commission's process by writing a letter, e-mail (comments@wutc.wa.gov) or by fax; and

(II) How to contact the commission for process questions or notification of the scheduled open meeting date and the commission's mailing address and toll-free telephone number (1-800-562-6150).

(d) Methods of notice permitted include:

(i) Bill insert;

(ii) Bill message;

(iii) Printing on the back of billing envelope; or

(iv) A separate mailing (e.g., postcard, letter) to all affected customers.

(2) Customer notice after commission action:

(a) Each affected customer must receive notice on the first bill after commission decision when a telecommunications company increases rates for:

(i) Non-recurring charges (e.g., late payment fees, NSF fees, etc.);

(ii) Local tax increase;

(iii) Grandfather services; and

(iv) Changes to ownership or control of the operating company (see WAC 480-143-210 for content of notice).

(b) A company must notify, at a minimum:

(i) Each affected customer; and

(ii) The public affairs department of the commission.

(c) Content of notice. After commission action, 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 may seek additional information.

(d) Methods of notice permitted. In addition to the methods permitted in section 1(d), notice after commission action, companies may notify customers by publication in a company newsletter.

(3) Commission assistance on customer notice. Companies seeking assistance

from the commission's public affairs department on customer notice must submit a draft notice at least one week before the company's planned printing date.

(4) Other customer notice. The commission may require notification to customers other than described in this rule when the company's proposal may have a significant impact on:

- (a) Customer rates;
- (b) Access to services; or
- (c) When the commission determines that additional customer education is needed.

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

(1) Prior customer notice for competitively classified companies or competitively classified services:

(a) Ten day notice. Each affected customer must receive at least ten days' direct notice prior to 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 include:

- (i) Bill insert;
- (ii) Bill message;
- (iii) Printing on the back of billing envelope; or
- (iv) A separate mailing (e.g., postcard, letter) to all affected customers.

(2) Commission assistance on notice. Companies seeking assistance from the commission's public affairs department on customer notice must submit a draft notice at least one week before the company's planned printing date.

(3) Other customer notice. The commission may require notification to customers other than described in this rule when the company's proposal may have a significant impact on:

- (a) Customer rates;
- (b) Access to services; or
- (c) When the commission determines that additional customer education is needed.

(4) 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 public affairs staff in advance.