

## Telephone Service

The Iowa Utilities Board has established specific rules for landline telephone service disconnection, but does not regulate wireless telephone service or billing. The most common reason for disconnection of telephone service is non-payment on the local service portion of a bill.

In the case of bill non-payment:

- The telephone utility must provide a customer 20 days from the day a bill is issued to pay the bill.
- The telephone utility must give a customer written notice of a pending disconnection for non-payment. The disconnection date cannot be less than five days after the notice is mailed.
- Disconnection for telephone service may be postponed for 30 days if a permanent resident of a customer's household has a serious health problem. However, a statement of health from a physician or public health official may be required.

## Utility Billing Disputes

Electric, natural gas, telephone utilities, and Iowa-American Water Company must delay disconnection for up to 45 days if a customer disagrees with the accuracy of their bill. However, the customer must pay the undisputed portion of the bill and attempt to resolve the billing issue with the utility. For additional assistance with billing disputes, contact IUB Customer Service at 877.565.4450 or 515.725.7321.

## Water Utility Service

The Iowa Utilities Board regulates only one water utility (Iowa-American Water Company). For questions regarding water service, please contact the governing board of the water utility that provides your service.

## Propane Service

The Iowa Utilities Board does not regulate propane gas service or billing. For information, contact the Iowa Propane Association at 515.564.1260.

# Utility Service Questions



Iowa Utilities Board  
515.725.7321  
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# Iowa Utilities Board



## Customer Service

The Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) is the state agency that regulates certain electric, natural gas, telephone, and water utilities in Iowa. The IUB staff assists customers by providing information and investigating utility complaints. Many complaints to the IUB involve disconnection of utility services and/or billing disputes. In order to address each specific customer situation, the IUB has detailed rules on disconnection of natural gas, electric, water, and telephone service. These rules protect you, the consumer, from arbitrary and potentially dangerous disconnection. They also give utilities the right to timely payment for services they provide. For more information about disconnection of utility service, contact IUB Customer Service at 877.565.4450 or 515.725.7321.



## Gas & Electric Service

Disconnection rules require that the utility give a customer 20 days from the day a bill is issued to pay the bill. Before disconnection for non-payment, a gas or electric utility must:

- Provide the customer written notice at least 12 days before a pending disconnection. This must include a summary of the customer's rights and responsibilities to avoid disconnection.

- Attempt to contact the customer by phone or in person prior to disconnection. If contact fails during the winter months (November 1 - April 1), the utility must place a notice on the customer's door at least one day before disconnection.
- Delay disconnection when the National Weather Service forecasts temperatures of 20 degrees Fahrenheit or below during the next 24 hours for the customer's service area.
- Offer the customer a reasonable payment agreement, with the option of spreading payments over at least 12 months\* in addition to current monthly service billings. A reasonable payment agreement takes into account the customer's income, expenses, and extraordinary financial circumstances that may affect a customer's ability to pay. If a customer and the utility cannot agree upon a payment agreement, the customer can contact the IUB for assistance. It is vital that the customer abide by the terms of an accepted agreement. Missing a payment by even one day may void the agreement and allow the utility to disconnect service with one day's notice. If it is a customer's first payment agreement, the utility may allow one late payment if the customer makes the payment within four days of the due date to avoid disconnection. Under certain circumstances, the utility may offer the customer a second payment agreement, but in many cases it is not required to do so.

\*NOTE: If service has been disconnected for more than 120 days, the utility is only required to offer a six-month payment agreement.



## Electric & Natural Gas Service Disconnection Moratorium

Between November 1 and April 1 of each year, the utility cannot disconnect electric or natural gas service to a customer who is certified as eligible for either low-income energy or weatherization assistance. Other electric or natural gas service customers may be disconnected for failure to pay utility bills during this time. To avoid disconnection of electric or gas service during the winter moratorium, customers must apply to their local Community Action Agency (CAA) before the scheduled disconnection, and customers must notify both the electric and gas utility that they have applied. The length of time to determine eligibility by the CAA will vary. However, the utility will delay disconnection for up to 30 days while the agency rules on eligibility. To locate the nearest CAA, customers should contact their local utility or the Iowa Department of Human Rights at 515.281.0859.



## Military Service Deployment

If a head of household is a member of the military and has been deployed, electric and natural gas utility service cannot be shut off during active duty or within 90 days after the end of deployment. For this exception to be valid, the customer must inform the utility of military deployment prior to disconnection. However, electric and natural gas service used during active duty is still owed.



## Resident Medical Exception

If a permanent resident of a household has a serious health issue, electric, natural gas, and telephone utility disconnection can be postponed for 30 days. However, the utility may require a statement of health from a physician or a public health official. If customer verification is made by telephone, written verification must be provided within five days. To retain service, the customer must negotiate and maintain a payment agreement and stay current on all new bills.

