



# Overview of Bill Protections and Disconnection of Service to Residential Gas & Electric Customers



March 2, 2017





# Bill Assistance

## One-Time Assistance

- Pay Plans allow customers additional time to pay overdue amounts
- One-time energy credit for up to \$300 through the Relief for Energy Assistance through Community Help (REACH) Program
- One-time assistance from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) up to \$1000

## Longer-Term Assistance

- Balanced Payment Plan – allows customers a level bill all year round to ease budgeting
- California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) Program - qualifying customers save 20 percent on their gas bill and 35% or more on percent on their electric bill
- Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) Program - a monthly discount on customer electric bills on qualifying households greater than three people
- Medical Baseline Allowance Program - customers with special energy needs related to a medical condition receive higher baseline quantities to help with their energy bill





# Why Would A Utility Disconnect a Customer?

A utility would disconnect its customer for two reasons:

1. Because the customer requested it (moving, major construction, long term vacancy, other planned circumstances)
2. Non-payment of either bills or credit deposits requests
  - Commission Decision 14-06-036 outlines communication strategies, consumer protections and timelines for electric/gas customer disconnections (R.10-02-005)
  - Disconnections are governed by Rule 11





# Rule 11 - Three Step Disconnection Process

1. 15 day written notice for disconnection of non-payment mailed to the customer.
2. 48 hour written notice mailed to the customer.
  - In person visits for special needs customers e.g. those on life support, medical baseline
  - Door hangs if customer is not available
3. Final outbound call before disconnection (same day) to offer pay-plan.

\*\* notices are offered in language (top 5 language in the service territory)





# Typical Utility Process

Calendar Days	
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bill is completed and issued</li> <li>• Due Date appears on bill</li> </ul>
+21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bill Due Date</li> </ul>
+27 - 33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If bill has not been paid and meets collection criteria, a Collections Process will start</li> </ul>
Work Days	
0	<b>15-day notice is issued on subsequent bill</b>
10 Work Days after 15 Day Notice	<b>48-hour notice is issued</b>
4 Work Days after 48 Hour Notice	<b>Outbound Phone Call</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An attempt to contact the customer prior to issuing a disconnect</li> </ul>
4 Work Days after Phone Call	<b>Issue Disconnect</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An order to disconnect the service is issued</li> </ul>





## Disconnection Exceptions

- Utility *may* extend payment options to a residential customer who alleges an inability to pay
- Utility *must* extend payment options to a residential customer if termination of service would:
  - Life threatening to a customer or property resident (certified by doctor, nurse, social worker)
  - Customer is willing to enter into payment arrangements





# PG&E's Year Over Year Comparisons

	Total Disconnections	Residential Non-CARE/FERA Disconnects	Residential CARE/FERA Disconnects	Residential Medical/Life-Support Disconnects*
November 2015	14,267	13,466	801	67
November 2016	20,788	14,746	6,042	91
December 2015	12,770	11,942	828	60
December 2016	12,591	10,110	2,481	5
January 2016	26,341	19,913	6,428	78
January 2017	30,580	17,330	13,250	100

**NOTES:**

1. Utilities self impose a moratorium of customer disconnections in late December to avoid disconnecting customers during the holiday season; Thus the decrease in December and corresponding increase in January.
2. PG&E has 5.469 million customer accounts.





## Who is Disconnected

- Of the total 30,580 disconnections in Jan 2017 13,250 of these customers were low income (i.e. CARE/FERA) and 100 medical baseline customers. The rest (17,330) were regular accounts (i.e. Non-low income).
- PG&E's disconnection rate for Jan. 2017 was less than one half of 1% (i.e. 0.56%)







# Majority of Disconnections are Reconnected Within 24 Hours

	Total Residential Reconnects	Residential Non-CARE/FERA Reconnects	Residential CARE/FERA Reconnects	Residential Medical/Life-Support Reconnects*
November 2015	11,913	11,300	613	9
November 2016	16,719	12,199	4,520	17
December 2015	10,599	9,966	633	7
December 2016	10,186	8,313	1,873	1
January 2016	20,439	16,058	4,381	12
January 2017	24,488	13,731	10,757	9





# Commission Complaint Process

- If customer and utility cannot agree on payment arrangements, customer can file a complaint with the CPUC
  - Informal Complaints are handled by our Consumer Affairs Branch
  - Formal Complaints are proceedings assigned to a Commissioner and an ALJ
- Customer will not be disconnected during the complaint resolution process.

