



Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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PSC Encourages Consumers to Manage Heating Bills

MADISON – The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) would like to see Wisconsin utility customers stay connected as the colder months come to an end. The PSC is advising consumers to contact their local utility company if they are behind in heating payments for the 2006-2007 winter season. Utility service may be disconnected on April 16, 2007 if energy bills have not been paid or a payment plan has not been arranged with the utility.

To provide health and safety protections during Wisconsin's cold winters, PSC rules prohibit utilities from disconnecting customers between November 1 and April 15. However, after April 15, utilities are not required to provide service to customers who are behind on their bills. To avoid disconnection, customers who have fallen behind in payments over the winter are encouraged to contact their local utility to set up a payment plan.

If customers have contacted their utility and cannot reach a payment agreement, they are encouraged to contact the PSC's Consumer Affairs Unit at:

Public Service Commission Consumer Affairs
Toll free: 1-800-225-7729
In the Madison area: 608-266-2001

To help consumers who may need assistance in paying their heating bills, Governor Jim Doyle developed Wisconsin's Energy Help Initiative. This comprehensive plan provides a one-stop-shop for information on all of the state's energy assistance programs, ways to trim energy bills by reducing energy consumption and other energy-related programs throughout the state. For information about Governor Doyle's Energy Help Initiative, please call **1-800-522-3014** or visit <http://energyhelp.wi.gov>.

Part of Governor Doyle's efforts to help households pay their heating bills is the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP). WHEAP manages low income and public benefits programs which provide financial assistance to pay energy bills for households that may qualify. The amount of the assistance varies according to household size, income level and heating costs. To find out if you qualify for assistance, please call **1-866-432-8947** or visit <http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov>.

(MORE)

Wisconsin's largest utility companies

Consumers who have fallen behind in payments over the winter are encouraged to contact their local utility company by calling the phone numbers below:

Xcel Energy	800-895-4999
Alliant Energy	800-255-4268
We Energies	800-842-4565
Wisconsin Public Service Corporation	800-450-7260
Madison Gas & Electric Company	608-252-7144

If consumers cannot reach a payment agreement and the utility does not receive payment, the utility may disconnect service. Utility companies must inform customers before discontinuing service. In addition, the PSC strongly encourages consumers to be cautious when using alternative heat sources, such as electric space heaters. These devices are not designed to or intended to be used as a primary heating source. If left unattended or around children, the heaters can be very dangerous.

For more information about utility disconnections, please see the PSC's Utility Disconnections brochure at: <http://psc.wi.gov/thelibrary/publications/general/consumer04.pdf>.

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