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PSC Urges Utility Customers to Seek Assistance Before the End of COVID-19 Disconnection Moratorium

Moratorium ends July 25

MADISON - The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) is urging electric, natural gas, and water utility customers with outstanding bills to make payment arrangements or apply for assistance before the COVID-19 moratorium on disconnections for nonpayment expires on July 25.

"Although the moratorium ends July 25, we continue to closely monitor customers' ability to access essential electric, natural gas, and water services, especially as we are now, again, seeing COVID-19 cases climb steadily across our state," said PSC Chairperson Rebecca Cameron Valcq. "The communities being hit the hardest by COVID-19 are often the same ones that have been disproportionately impacted economically. Disconnected utility service impedes a person's ability to stay home, social distance, and wash hands."

To avoid disconnection, customers who have fallen behind on payments are encouraged to first contact their utility to set up a payment plan.

If full payment or a payment plan cannot be agreed on, utilities will be allowed to send disconnection notices starting July 15. The PSC has required utilities to temporarily waive disconnections for customers who are infected or recovering from COVID-19. Generally, utility disconnections must be postponed when there's a medical emergency in the home. For more information about utility disconnections and collections, see the PSC's [fact sheet on residential customer rights](#).

If customers cannot reach an agreement with their utility, they are urged to contact the PSC by calling 1-800-225-7729, or by [filing a complaint on the PSC website](#).

If customers are having difficulty paying their energy bills or receive a disconnection notice, they may be eligible for assistance from the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP). To determine eligibility or find out where to apply for assistance, go to <http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov/> or call 1-866-HEATWIS.

On June 11, 2020, the PSC voted to lift the temporary moratorium on utility

disconnections for nonpayment that were put in place in March, during the COVID-19 public health emergency. However, the PSC required that a utility postpone disconnection for 21 days where there is a positive COVID-19 test and up to an additional 21 days if the person is still under quarantine following the original postponement.

Additionally, the PSC voted to allow utilities to commence charging late payment fees on debts incurred after July 15, refuse service for failure to provide documentation to prove identity and residency after July 25, and allow utilities to require a cash deposit as a condition of new service starting July 31.

The PSC decision requires utilities to continue offering deferred payment agreements to all customers through August 15. The PSC is continuing to monitor utilities' disconnection plans, payment plan terms, and customer notices to ensure they conform to existing orders, administrative code, and state law.

For information on the PSC's previous actions regarding utility disconnections for COVID-19, click [here](#).

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