

## **ELECTRICAL SERVICE SHUTOFF RULES**

1. The City of Eaton Rapids shall refund any late fees, fines, or payments related to a shutoff or resumption of service if those late fees, fines, or payments were improperly assessed because of the failure to provide notice as required by these Rules.
2. Notwithstanding other requirements of this Rule, service may be shut off temporarily for reasons of health or safety or in a local, state or national emergency. When service is shut off for reasons of health or safety, a reasonable attempt shall be made to leave a notice at the premises if feasible.
3. The City of Eaton Rapids may shut off or terminate service to a residential customer for any of the following reasons:
  - A. The customer has not paid a delinquent account that accrued within the last six (6) years.
  - B. The customer has failed to provide a deposit or guarantee as required.
  - C. The customer has engaged in unauthorized use of the utility's service.
  - D. The customer has failed to comply with the terms and conditions of a payment plan.
  - E. The customer has refused to arrange access at reasonable times for the purpose of inspection, meter reading, maintenance, or replacement of equipment that is installed upon the premises or for the removal of a meter.
  - F. The customer misrepresented his or her identity for the purpose of obtaining service or put service in another person's name without permission of the other person.
  - G. The customer has violated any rules of the City of Eaton Rapids as to adversely affect the safety of the customer or other persons or the integrity of the system.
  - H. The customer has not paid for service at a premises occupied by another person, and it is not feasible to provide service to the occupant as a customer without a major revision, as determined by the utility, of existing distribution facilities.
4. The City of Eaton Rapids shall supply information regarding the following to customers at least two (2) times a year:
  - (i) The energy assistance telephone line number at the Michigan Department of Human Services or an operable 2-1-1 system telephone number.

- (ii) Medical emergency protections.
  - (iii) Military shutoff protections.
  - (iv) Low income protections provided in these Rules.
  - (v) Senior citizen protections provided in these Rules.
- B. The information required under Subsection (A) may be supplied in or on a customer's bill, in a bill insert, in a newsletter issued to customers, a public forum, newspaper announcement, an electronic communication, or in any other manner approved by the governing body of the utility.
5. The City of Eaton Rapids shall, at least once per year, attempt to identify senior citizen customers by at least one (1) of the following methods:
- A. Conducting customer interviews.
  - B. Obtaining information from a consumer reporting agency or consumer reporting service.
  - C. First class mail.
  - D. A personal visit to the customer.
  - E. A written notice left at or on the customer's door.
  - F. On a bill or in a bill insert.
6. Service shall not be shut off unless a notice is sent to the customer by first class mail or is personally served not less than ten (10) days before the date of the proposed shutoff. A record of the date the notice was sent shall be maintained.
7. A notice of shutoff shall contain all of the following information:
- A. The name and address of the customer, and the address at which service is provided, if different.
  - B. A clear and concise statement of the reason for the proposed shutoff of service.
  - C. The date on or after which service may be shut off unless the customer takes appropriate action.
  - D. The telephone number and address where the customer may make inquiry or file a complaint.

8. For an involuntary shutoff, at least one attempt, in addition to the notice provided in Section 6, shall be made one or more days before the shutoff of the service to contact the customer by one (1) or more of the following methods:
  - A. A personal or automated telephone call where direct contact is made with a member of the customer's household or a message is recorded on an answering machine or voice mail.
  - B. First class mail.
  - C. A personal visit to the customer.
  - D. A written notice left at or on the customer's door.
9. All attempts to contact the customer under Section 10 shall be documented.
10. Service may be shut off to a customer on the date specified in the notice of the shutoff or within ten (10) days following that date. If service is not shut off and a subsequent notice is sent, then service shall not be shut off before the date specified in the subsequent notice. Shut off shall occur only between the hours of 8 a.m. and 3 p.m.
11. Service shall not be shut off on a day, or a day immediately preceding a day, when services cannot be restored.
12. Not later than two hours before the close of the utility's business on the day service is shut off, a notice shall be left at the customer's residence stating that service has been shut off and providing the address and telephone number where the customer may arrange to have service restored. Alternatively, a contact by telephone may be made with an adult who identifies himself or herself as a person living at the residence providing the same information within the same time frame.
13. No later than three (3) business days after shutting off service to a known senior citizen customer, the City of Eaton Rapids shall make at least two attempts to contact that customer to advise the customer of the actions that the customer must take to have his or her service restored.
  - A. The following notification methods may be used to contact the customer:
    - (i) First-class mail.
    - (ii) A personal visit to the customer.
    - (iii) A written notice left at or on the customer's door.

- (iv) Any other method approved by the governing body of the utility.
  - B. A communication described in Subsection (A)(iii) or (iv) made on the day of disconnection meets the requirements of this Rule.
  - C. A message left on an answering machine or voice mail or a written notice left at or on a customer's door must include a toll free or local telephone number indicating that it may be used to contact a representative of the City of Eaton Rapids regarding restoration of service.
  - D. The notice requirement of this section may be met with regard to a senior citizen customer by, within three (3) business days of shutting off service, making a documented referral of that customer to a social service or government agency.
14. Reasonable efforts shall be made to restore service on the day the customer requests restoration. Except for reasons beyond the control of the City of Eaton Rapids, the service shall be restored not later than the first working day after the customer's request.
15. A charge may be assessed for restoring service.

#### **COOLING SEASON SHUTOFFS**

16. Each morning, the temperature forecast in the (local newspaper or another other index) will be reviewed. If the temperature forecast for the current day OR the following day is 95 degrees or greater, eligible senior citizen customers will not be disconnected on the current day. For Fridays, customers will not be disconnected if the forecast is for 95 degrees or greater for Friday, Saturday or Sunday.

#### **HEATING SEASON SHUTOFFS**

17. The City of Eaton Rapids shall not shut off service to a customer during the heating season for nonpayment of a delinquent account if the customer is an eligible senior citizen customer or if an eligible low income customer enters into a winter protection payment plan to pay to the utility a monthly amount equal to 7% of the estimated annual bill for the eligible low income customer or the eligible low income customer and the utility mutually agree upon a winter protection payment plan with different terms and the eligible low income customer demonstrates, within 14 days of requesting shutoff

protection, that he or she has applied for state or federal heating assistance. If an arrearage exists at the time an eligible low income customer applies for protection from shut off of service during the heating season, the customer should be permitted to pay the arrearage in equal monthly installments between the date of application and the start of the subsequent heating season.

18. If an eligible low income customer fails to comply with the terms and conditions of a winter protection payment plan, or if the customer fails to pay a monthly installment on a preexisting arrearage, service may be shut off after giving the customer a notice, by personal service, or first class mail, that contains all of the following information:
  - A. That the customer has defaulted on a winter protection payment plan or has failed to pay a monthly installment on a preexisting arrearage.
  - B. The nature of the default.
  - C. That unless the customer makes the payments that are past due within ten (10) days of the date of mailing, service will be shut off.
  - D. The date on or after which service will be shut off, unless the customer takes appropriate action.
  - E. That the customer may dispute the claim in writing before the date of the proposed shutoff of service.
  - F. That the utility will not shut off service pending the resolution of a dispute.
  - G. The telephone number and address where the customer may make inquiry or file a complaint.
  - H. That the customer should contact a social services agency immediately if the customer believes he or she might be eligible for emergency economic assistance.
  - I. That the shut off will be postponed if a medical emergency exists at the customer's residence.
  - J. That a deposit and restoration charge may be required if the utility shuts off service for nonpayment of a delinquent account.

#### **SHUTOFF OF CRITICAL CARE CUSTOMERS**

19. Shutoff shall be postponed for not more than 21 days if the customer or a member of the customer's household is a critical care customer or has a certified medical emergency. The customer's certification shall identify the medical condition, any medical or life-

supporting equipment being used, and the specific time period during which the shutoff of service will aggravate the medical emergency. Shut off may be extended for further periods of not more than 21 days, not to exceed a total postponement of shutoff of service of 63 days, only if the customer provides additional certification that the customer or a member of the customer's household remains a critical care customer or has a certified medical emergency. If shutoff of service has occurred without any postponement being obtained, the service shall be restored for not more than 21 days, and shall continue for further periods of not more than 21 days, not to exceed a total of 63 days in any 12-month period per household member. Annually, shutoff extensions totaling more than 126 days per household will not be given.

20. As used in these Rules:

- A. "Critical care customer" means a customer who requires, or has a household member who requires, home medical equipment or a life support system, and who has provided appropriate documentation from a physician or medical facility to the City of Eaton Rapids identifying the medical equipment or life-support system and certifying that an interruption of service would be immediately life threatening.
- B. "Electric Service Limiter: means an electric meter or device used in conjunction with an electric meter than automatically interrupts all electric service to a customer without intervening direction from the City of Eaton Rapids when a utility-imposed peak usage limit is exceeded.
- C. "Eligible low income customer" means a customer whose household income does not exceed 150% of the poverty level, as published by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, or who receives any of the following:
  - (i) Assistance from a state emergency relief program.
  - (ii) Food stamps.
  - (iii) Medicaid.
- D. "Eligible senior citizen customer" means a utility customer who is 65 years of age or older and who advises the utility of his or her eligibility.
- E. "Heating season" means November 1 through March 31.
- F. "Medical Emergency" means an existing medical condition of the customer or a member of the customer's household, as defined and certified by a physician or public health official on official stationery or company-provided form, that will be aggravated by the lack of utility service.

G. "Senior Citizen Customer" means a customer of the City of Eaton Rapids who is 65 years of age or older.

21. These Rules shall be part of the terms and conditions of the contract for service between the City of Eaton Rapids and the customer.

22. These rules apply only to residential customers.

23.

#### NOTICE TO ALL CITY OF EATON RAPIDS RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC CUSTOMERS

The City of Eaton Rapids electric utility is in the process of implementing new State Laws that have recently gone into effect that protect several classes of residential customers against having their electric service shutoff during the heating season (November through March). The new laws offer protection for the following types of customers:

a. eligible senior citizen customer is defined as a customer 65 years of age and older who advises the City that they want to be identified as eligible for shutoff protection. *To be eligible for shutoff protection you need to tell us that you want to be considered a senior citizen customer.*

b. eligible low income customer is defined as a customer whose household income does not exceed 150% of the poverty level or who receives assistance from a state emergency relief program, food stamps or medicaid. *To be eligible you will be required to enter into a payment plan that includes paying off over due balances.*

c. a critical care customer is defined as a customer or household member who requires home medical equipment or a life support system. *To be eligible you must be able to document that an interruption of the electrical service would pose an immediate life threatening situation.*

d. a medical emergency exists in your household defined as an existing medical condition of the customer or household member that would be aggravated if the electric service was interrupted. *To be eligible a physician or public health official must certify the medical condition.*

There are additional rules, requirements and payment obligations for all these categories that the customer must comply with in order to become or to remain eligible for shut off protection. **If you are in one or more of these categories and are having trouble or think you will have trouble paying your utility bill this winter, please call or come in to City Hall between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, 200 S. Main Street, 517-663-8118. If you don't know if you qualify or have questions please call City Hall** to learn more about how these new laws might help you.