



Know Your Rights

Utility Shut-Offs During the Pandemic

Can my service be shut off during the pandemic if I am behind on my bill?

- Yes. [Regulated](#)* utilities may shut off your service starting November 9, 2020.
- **Notice of Termination**
 - You must always receive a written termination notice at least 10 days (and up to 60 days) before being shut off.
 - During the pandemic, you will also receive an *additional* notice informing you that you are at risk of termination. This must be sent at least 10 days before the utility sends a termination notice.
 - Your utility must also try to contact you 72 hours prior to termination, either by phone, in person, or by email (if you consent to receive electronic notice).
- **Continued Protection from Termination for Low and Moderate Income Households**
 - You will be protected from termination until March 31, 2021 if:
 - (1) Your income is at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (see chart).
 - (2) You apply for available assistance programs.
 - (3) You request a payment arrangement.
 - Your utility may deny you a payment arrangement. That is OK. You are still protected as long as you request a payment arrangement – even if your utility won’t give you one.
 - You should not accept a payment arrangement that you cannot afford.
 - What if I have a medical condition?
 - If you are already protected from termination (see above), you DO NOT need to seek a medical certificate to prevent a termination.
 - If you are not already protected, you can get a medical certificate from your doctor, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant to prevent termination for up to 30 days if you or a household member has a serious illness or if service is required to treat your condition. You may submit at least two additional medical certificates after the first if you continue to be at risk of termination.
 - What if my landlord stopped paying the bill, or requested that service be shut off?
 - Tenants have a right to continue service, even if their landlord stops paying or requests service be shut off to a tenant’s property. Contact your [local legal aid program](#) if your service is shut off based on your landlord’s actions.
 - I am a victim of domestic violence. Are there any special protections for me?
 - Yes! Additional protections are available for victims of domestic violence with a Protection from Abuse Order or other court order demonstrating that they are a victim. Contact PULP for assistance!

*The information in this handout applies to electric, natural gas, and water utilities that are regulated by the Public Utility Commission. If you are having trouble with an unregulated utility, see the information below for help.

Having trouble paying your bills?

- Always try to pay what you can when you can.
- Contact your utility company or County Assistance Office to apply for help:
 - **Customer Assistance Programs**
 - Eligibility: Income at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level (see chart)
 - Benefits: Discounted bill and possible debt forgiveness over time.
 - Contact your utility for more information
 - **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program: LIHEAP**
 - Available from November 2, 2020 to April 9, 2021
 - Eligibility:
 - Income at or below 150% FPL (see chart)
 - Home heating responsibility
 - Pennsylvania resident
 - **For crisis grant:** home heating emergency that can be resolved by grant
 - Grant assistance to help pay for heat-related utility service, including gas, electric, or deliverable fuels (oil, wood, coal, or propane)
 - Consumers can apply every year.
 - Cash grants range from \$200-\$1000; Crisis grants range from \$25-\$800
 - Also helps to repair broken or inefficient heating systems.
 - Contact your local [County Assistance Office](#) or go online to apply
 - **Hardship Fund Programs**
 - Eligibility: Income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (see chart)
 - Benefits: Grant assistance, generally up to \$500
 - Contact your utility for more information
 - **Energy Efficiency and Usage Reduction Assistance**
 - If you have high bills and a low income, you may be eligible for free energy efficiency measures to help reduce your monthly bills. Contact your utility for more information.

2020 Federal Poverty Limit Guidelines			
Household Members	150% FPL	200% FPL	300% FPL
1	\$19,140	\$25,520	\$38,280
2	\$25,860	\$34,480	\$51,720
3	\$32,580	\$43,440	\$65,160
4	\$39,300	\$52,400	\$78,600
5	\$46,020	\$61,360	\$92,040

Where can I get help to avoid termination or to be reconnected?

- First contact your utility, apply for assistance, and/or request a payment arrangement.
- Contact your [local legal aid](#) office.
- Contact PULP's Utility Hotline at 844-645-2500.
- Contact the PUC to file an informal complaint by calling 1-800-692-7380 or [click here](#).

The information above is intended to provide general information about utility rights to Pennsylvanians impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19). This information is up to date as of October 27, 2020. Each situation is different, and circumstances continue to change. For advice about your case, contact PULP's utility hotline at 844-645-2500.