

Policy: Government Shutdown Utility Service Continuation

I. Policy statement

This policy establishes the procedure for providing uninterrupted gas and electric service to eligible government employed residential customers during and immediately following a government shutdown.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all residential gas customers who are employed by a federal, state, or local government and are involuntarily furloughed because of a government shutdown.

III. Definitions

- **Eligible Residential Customer:**
 - Is employed by a federal, state, or local government.
 - Is involuntarily furloughed due to a government shutdown.
- **Government Shutdown:** A period when federal, state, or local government operations are suspended due to a lapse in appropriations.
- **Termination:** The disconnection of gas or electric service to a residential customer due to non-payment.
- **Verification of Employment:** Documentation that an eligible residential customer must provide to a utility to prove government employment.
- **Payment Plan:** An agreement established between an eligible residential customer and the utility to resolve outstanding arrears following a government shutdown.

IV. Policy requirements

A. Prohibition of service termination

- Utility companies are prohibited from terminating gas and/or electric service for eligible residential customers.
- This prohibition is effective during a government shutdown and for seven days after the shutdown has ended.

B. Customer responsibilities

- To qualify for the service termination prohibition, eligible residential customers must do the following before service can be terminated:
 - **Verify employment:** The customer must verify their government employment with the utility by submitting customer verification documents outlined in V. Procedures section B to Collections@Chpk.Com.
 - **Enter a payment plan:** After the government shutdown concludes, the customer must enter into a payment plan with the utility to address any past-due amounts.

C. Utility responsibilities

- **Notification of procedure:** Utilities must provide clear instructions to customers regarding the accepted types of employment verification documentation and the methods for submitting this documentation.
- **Submission timeline:** Utilities must establish and publicize these instructions within five business days of receiving notification of a government shutdown from the Maryland Public Service Commission. The Company is following the same guidelines for the remaining Chesapeake regulated service areas.
- **Communication:** Utilities must actively communicate with affected customers about the requirements and procedures for confirming eligibility and establishing payment plans.

V. Procedures

A. Initial shutdown notification

Upon notification of a government shutdown, the utility company will take the following actions:

1. **Disseminate verification information:** Within five business days, publish and distribute instructions on how furloughed government employees can submit proof of employment.

B. Customer verification

- Customers claiming eligibility under this policy must provide documentation to Collections@Chpk.com as specified by the utility. Accepted verification may include:
 - A copy of their government ID and most recent pay stub.
 - A copy of their official furlough notice.
- The utility will review the submitted documentation to confirm eligibility.

C. Post-shutdown process

- **Establishing payment plans:** Once the government shutdown has concluded, the utility will contact all eligible customers by email from Collections@chpk.com with past-due balances to establish a reasonable payment plan.
- **Account review:** The utility will review the customer's account history and financial situation to determine a fair and manageable payment arrangement.
- **Reimbursement:** After receiving back pay, customers are responsible for adhering to the agreed-upon payment plan.

VI. Compliance and enforcement

This policy is a regulatory mandate under Maryland Code, Public Utilities (PUA) § 7-307.4. Failure to comply may result in enforcement actions by the Maryland Public Service Commission. The Commission will monitor utility adherence to this policy during and after government shutdowns. This enforcement will span across our companies as a service to government employees affected by a government shutdown.