

Customer Service Standards

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Presentation Outline



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Instead of establishing rules, the Board supported a less prescriptive approach through customer service standards.

- This allows gas distributors to work with customers to find mutually agreeable payment plans that could extend up to several months depending on the individual circumstances.
- The Board requires gas distributors to document their policies, post them on their websites, make them available to customers and to adhere to those policies.
- Customer service standards are included in the individual gas distributor's Conditions of Service posted on the utility's website.

Modifications to customer service standards were effective:

Enbridge: April 1, 2012

Union: March 5, 2012

Customer service standards for eligible Low-income gas customers were effective:

Enbridge: January 1, 2013

Union: January 1, 2013

Same criteria for eligibility determination for gas and electricity distributors.

"Eligible Low-income customer" means a residential customer who:

- has a pre-tax household income at or below the most recent pre-tax Low Income Cut-Off, according to Statistics Canada, plus 15%, taking into account family size and community size, as qualified by a Social Service Agency or Government Agency; or*
- has been qualified for Emergency Financial Assistance.*

"Emergency Financial Assistance" means any Board-approved emergency financial assistance, or other financial assistance made available by a distributor, to eligible low-income customers.

- Emergency Financial Assistance Programs for the utilities are:*

Enbridge – Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) Union - Winter Warmth

"Social Service Agency or Government Agency" means:

- a social service agency or government agency that partners with a given distributor to assess eligibility for Emergency Financial Assistance; or*
- a social service agency or government agency that assesses eligibility for other energy financial assistance or low-income financial assistance programs, and partners with a given distributor to qualify customers for eligibility.*

Low-income Eligibility

Process between Utility and Social Agency



- Social Agency is contacted by a customer and determines eligibility for Emergency Financial Assistance.
- For Enbridge, social agencies complete the application form and sends to collection.support@accenture.com.
- For Union Gas, social agencies continue to email uglagencyassist@uniongas.com.
- Brochures/information sheets:
 - For Enbridge, will be sent by the gas distributor.
 - For Union, will be sent by United Way of Chatham-Kent.

- Required for new customers or when future payment cannot be assured.
- For Union Gas equal to two of the average month's gas usage based on the last 12 months usage history.
- For Enbridge Gas a fixed \$250.
- Security deposits can be paid over a maximum of six monthly instalments without interest.
- The deposit will be waived if the customer:
 - has maintained good payment history;
 - for Union Gas, enters into both the Equal Billing Plan and the Automatic Payment Plan;
 - for Enbridge, enters into an Automatic Payment Plan; or
 - provides a letter of reference with a good rating from a Canadian natural gas or hydro utility dated within the past 60 days.

- Automatically refunded with interest to the customers' account once the deposit has been paid in full and the customer has exhibited twelve months of good payment history.

Eligible Low-income Customers

- Waived for Low-income customers who do not have an account with a financial institution and are moving residences provided that the customer: (i) has been qualified as a Low-income customer by a Social Agency and (ii) has enrolled in an Equal Billing Plan.

Note: A Low-income eligible customer who has been disconnected for non-payment during the preceding two years, would require a security deposit at the discretion of the distributor.

- 20 days for payment before a Late Payment Charge is applied.
- Issue date and the Late Payment applicable date are on all invoices.
- Billing and Payment options include:
 - Automatic Payment Plan;
 - Equal Billing Plan;
 - Combine both equal billing and automatic payment options.
- Credit cards are an acceptable form of payment:
 - Not accepted at the door.
 - The customer is responsible for the convenience fee.
 - This was a new payment option for Union Gas effective March 5, 2012.
- The LPP fee is not applied to unpaid security deposit amounts.

- Convenience of equal payments throughout the year.
- Customers can join any time of the year (this was new for Enbridge starting Jan 1, 2013).
- Calculated based on prior year's volume and current rates.
- For Union Gas, customers in arrears are allowed to join an Equal Billing Plan. They are removed from EBP once disconnected for non-payment.
- For Enbridge, customers in arrears are allowed to join a Budget Billing Plan, provided they enter into an Arrears Payment Agreement.
- In August for Union and July for Enbridge of each year, accounts are "trued up" and credited/billed for differences between what has been paid and actual consumption.

Arrears Management Agreements



- Gas distributors will work with customers to find mutually agreeable payment plans that could extend up to several months depending on the individual circumstances.
- Gas distributors will contact the customer to remind them of required payments under an agreed upon payment arrangement.
- Notification is sent 10 days prior to cancellation of the arrangement and further collection action.

For Eligible Low-income customers

- Late Payment charges are waived for Low-income customers who have entered into a payment agreement.

Note: In the event that a Low-income eligible customer defaults on a payment agreement, then the option to have late payment charges waived with any future payment agreements will no longer be available for that customer.

- Gas distributors provide:
 - **10 days written notification;**
 - a separate notice with detailed information such as the earliest and latest date of disconnection;
 - a message on the bill that the account is in a position to be locked;
 - at least 2 outbound calls.
- Gas distributors to consider any paid security deposit prior to initiating disconnection.
- Payments are accepted from a financial institution or by credit card.
- Once account is paid customers are reconnected within 2 business days.
- A Company-imposed moratorium exists during the winter months.

Disconnection for Non-Payment



For Eligible Low-income customers

- Disconnection suspended for 21 days if gas distributor is notified that the customer is being assessed for Emergency Financial Assistance by a social service or government agency.

Correction of Billing Errors



- At Union Gas, adjustments for up to 2 years for over-billed accounts and 1 year for under-billed accounts.
- At Enbridge, adjustments for over or under billing are made for up to 2 years.
- Bills with significant adjustments include messages informing customers who to contact for available options (new for Enbridge Jan 1, 2013).
- Over-billed accounts: customers can request a cheque or credit.
- Under-billed accounts: gas distributor will work with the customer to find a mutually agreeable payment schedule.

Allocation of Payment Between Gas and Non-gas Charges



Enbridge

- Charges appearing on a customer's invoice are for gas and for charges from other companies.
- Payments are allocated to the oldest arrears first.

Union

- All charges appearing on a customer's invoice are for services related to the consumption of natural gas.
- Payments are applied to charges based on First In First Out, then a hierarchy of priority for charges incurred at the same time.

Contact Information for Social Agencies



Enbridge

Contact Person: Sonia Fazari
Phone: 416 753 6962
Email: Sonia.fazari@enbridge.com
Conditions of Service: <https://www.enbridgegas.com/conditionsofservice>

Union

Contact Person: Margaret Nuttall
Phone: 519 758-2346
Email: mnuttall@uniongas.com
Conditions of Service: <http://www.uniongas.com/aboutus/policies/index.asp>