



# District of Columbia Public Service Commission

1333 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005  
202.626.5100 \*\*\* [www.dcpsc.org](http://www.dcpsc.org)

## Know the Facts:

### Disconnection of Utility Services During Extreme Cold and Heat

The District of Columbia Public Service Commission is an independent agency established by Congress in 1913 to regulate electric, natural gas, and local telephone companies in the District of Columbia.

District ratepayers who have received a disconnection notice or have a delinquent utility bill might be concerned that their utility services will be disconnected during periods of extreme hot or cold temperatures. The D.C. Public Service Commission and the D.C. Council have put in place consumer protections which prohibit utility disconnections during extreme temperatures.

#### Utility Disconnections During Extreme Cold

Over 25 years ago, the D.C. Public Service Commission enacted a Consumer Bill of Rights (CBOR) which sets forth the rights and responsibilities of consumers and service providers with respect to Billing, Payments, Use of Consumer Information, Disconnection of Service, Consumer Inquiries, and Informal and Formal Complaints. In 2009, the Commission adopted a revised CBOR, which, among other things, provides the consumers rights regarding disconnections during extreme cold. Section 310.3 of the CBOR provides that:



“Disconnection of natural gas or electric utility service for non-payment of bills, failure to post cash Security Deposit, or failure to comply with the terms of a DPA (Deferred Payment Agreement) where natural gas or electricity is used as the primary source of heating the residence is prohibited:

- (a) On any day when the National Weather Service forecast for the following 24 hours for the District of Columbia forecasts that the temperature will be thirty-two (32°) degrees Fahrenheit or below; or
- (b) On any day preceding a holiday or a weekend when the National Weather Service forecast indicated that the temperature will be thirty-two (32°) degrees Fahrenheit or below during the holiday or weekend.”

The CBOR can be viewed and downloaded on the Commission’s website: [http://dcpsc.org/pdf\\_files/commorders/consumerbill/Revised\\_Consumer\\_Bill\\_of\\_Rights.pdf](http://dcpsc.org/pdf_files/commorders/consumerbill/Revised_Consumer_Bill_of_Rights.pdf).

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*People Serving the Community!*



## **Utility Disconnections During Extreme Heat**

Historically, each summer, the D.C. Council has passed emergency legislation prohibiting Pepco from disconnecting customers if the heat index goes above 95 degrees. The prohibition is automatically in effect if the heat index is forecasted to be 95 degrees Fahrenheit or above. Moreover, Pepco is prohibited from disconnecting residential electricity service during the day preceding, and the day of, a forecast of extreme temperature.

The current emergency legislation passed by the D.C. Council is now cited as Act 19-0077. The emergency legislation amends the Retail Electric Competition and Consumer Protection Act of 1999 to prohibit the electric company from disconnecting residential electric service when the heat index is forecasted to be 95 degrees Fahrenheit or above.

The emergency legislation is accessible at the D.C. Council's website: <http://www.dccouncil.washington.dc.us/images/00001/20110629070407.pdf>.



## **Consumer Assistance with Utility Disconnections**

If you need assistance with a disconnection, you can contact the Commission's Office of Consumer Services and the District Department of the Environment. Both offices will work with you to link you to possible sources of financial assistance for getting your bills paid and service restored.

**Office of Consumer Services– 202-626-5120**

**District Department of the Environment– 311**

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