



**PIEDMONT  
GAS COMPANY**

**Customer Rights**

**&**

**Responsibilities**

## **DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE**

Applicable for gas service from PIEDMONT GAS COMPANY to customers at one location who will guarantee payment of the minimum monthly charge for term of Agreement for Gas Service or twelve consecutive months, whichever is less. Company shall have the right to curtail deliveries of gas whenever and to the extent necessary in its sole judgment for the protection of service to its higher priority customers (if so required). Company shall not be required to furnish Gas Service to any customer or applicant except by written Application for Gas Service between Company and Customer.

## **CHARACTER OF SERVICE**

The Company's supply of natural gas is received principally from local Ohio gas wells. Thus, the heating value and specific gravity of gas received may vary between delivery points and from day to day. These variations are beyond the control of the Company, which can only dispatch the gases received.

## **CONTINUITY OF SERVICE**

The company shall make reasonable provision to supply gas in sufficient quantity and at adequate uniform pressure, but not guarantee constant supply or adequate uniform pressure. The Company shall not be liable in damages for failure to supply gas or for interruptions in service, and shall be relieved of its obligation to serve and discontinue or modify service, if such failure or interruption is due to acts of God or the public enemy, military action, wars, insurrections, riots, civil disturbances, vandalism, strikes, fires, floods, explosions, acts or orders of any civil, judicial, or military authorities, failure of gas supply or gas facilities, and without limitation by the foregoing, accidents, contingencies or other cause beyond the control of the Company.

Without incurring any liability therefore, the Company may also suspend service after reasonable notice, for such period as may be reasonably necessary to make repairs to or changes in its plant, transmission, or distribution systems or other property.

## **MINIMUM GAS SERVICE STANDARDS**

A copy of the Minimum Gas Service Standards is available for review on the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio's website, [www.puco.ohio.gov](http://www.puco.ohio.gov), or you can receive a written copy from the commission upon request.

## **INITIATING NATURAL GAS SERVICE**

You will need to complete an Application for Natural Gas Service (and BTU Sheet for new construction) and return to Piedmont Gas Company to begin the process for initiating natural gas service. We will typically install your meter within three business days for service that requires no installation of gas pipelines and all necessary tariff and regulatory requirements have been met. If your request for service is made for more than the three business days, the meter will be installed at the requested date as long as all tariff and regulatory requirements have been met.

Service line installation is the responsibility of the customer. The customer may choose to have Piedmont Gas Company install the service line or they may choose an installer who has met the requirements of the Operator Qualification Rule (49 CFR Part 192, subpart N 192.801) and has been approved by Piedmont Gas Company.

New service line installation requests will be completed within twenty business days once Piedmont Gas Company has been notified that the customer's location is ready for service and all necessary tariff and regulatory requirements have been met. When a customer requests an installation date more than the twenty business days after the customer service location is ready for service, and all necessary tariff and regulatory requirements have been met, the service installation will be completed by the requested date.

If the meter installation or service line installation is expected to take longer than the usual three or twenty days, Piedmont Gas Company will notify you about the delay, the reason for the delay, the steps being taken to complete the work and the date the installation will be completed.

Contact Piedmont Gas Company directly for information regarding pricing of a new service line installation or to verify qualification for your chosen qualified installer.

## **SERVICE LINES**

The general term "Service Line" is commonly used to describe the complete connection of the line from the company's main line up to and including the meter connection. It consists of two distinct parts, (1) The distribution main service line connection and (2) The customer service line.

(1) The distribution main service line connection consists of the tap at the main line, necessary pipe and appurtenances to extend to the customer's property line or the curb stop location (shut-off valve) and curb box. There is a Tap Fee for this portion. This connection shall be installed by the company or its representative, and shall be owned and maintained the company.

(2) The customer service line consists of the portion of pipe from the outlet on the curb stop (shut-off valve) to the inlet of the meter, including the meter connection. The Customer's service line shall be installed at the Customer's expense. The Company shall have the right to prescribe the specifications, size, location and termination points of the Customer's service line. The Customer shall be responsible at all times for the safekeeping of Customer service lines installed on Customers' premises. The Customer, or Customer's agent, shall be liable for the cost of repairs for damage done to the customer service line due to negligence or misuse by the Customer or Customer's agent on the Customer's premises. However, the Company will assume responsibility for maintaining, repairing or replacing all the service line at its expense. Ownership of each Customer service line will continue to remain with the customer until such time as a repair or replacement of these facilities is required, at that point, any investment made by the Company in the repair or replacement of the facilities will be the property of the Company.

## **CUSTOMER PIPING**

The Customer shall install, own and maintain, at the Customer's expense, the customer piping from the outlet of the meter to all gas burning equipment. In some instances, customers may have customer piping that is buried (after the outlet of the meter), Piedmont Gas Company does not maintain this piping, for your safety you should periodically have this line inspected for leaks. If the buried piping is metallic, it should also be inspected periodically for corrosion. If an unsafe condition is found, the gas piping will need to be promptly repaired. TO OBTAIN HELP, plumbers and heating contractors can assist in locating, inspecting and repairing customer's buried piping.

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE LINE INSTALLATION**

A representative from Piedmont Gas Company will need to be involved with the location and sizing of the service line and meter location.

The meter set must be located at least three (3) feet from any door, window, vent, or other opening into the building wall and any source of ignition.

Due to changes that have been made to Federal Statutes and Regulations as defined in 49 CFR Part 192, subpart N. 192.801, we are required to implement an Operator Qualification (O.Q.) Program. These changes now require anyone doing certain tasks on a pipeline system must be qualified to do these tasks. Essentially what this means is only qualified people can install/maintain gas service lines, however any piping after the meter does not fall within the new regulations. If you choose to have your service line installed by a contractor, they must have the necessary O.Q. qualifications. You may contact our office at (330) 339-5454 to see if your contractor has the necessary qualifications.

Additional Federal Regulations require the installation of Excess Flow Valves on certain customer service lines.

An Excess Flow Valve (EFV) is a safety device designed to automatically shut off the flow of natural gas through a piping service line if it ruptures, thereby mitigating the impact of the rupture. As a safety device, EFV's are designed to automatically shut off the flow of natural gas if the service line between the EFV and the meter ruptures (this would include such things as excavation damage and vehicular damage up to the inlet

side of a gas meter setting). They are not designed to shut off the flow of gas if the line breaks at the connection of a gas appliance in a residence or in the customer's piping system (interior or exterior) on the customer's side of the gas meter.

In general, Excess Flow Valves are an added optional safety device that has no effect on the gas flow resulting from a small leak, such as a leak caused by corrosion or a small crack. Furthermore, EFV's will not operate in response to a leak within a building where gas service is provided. The valves are intended to respond to line ruptures between the valve location and the inlet to the gas meter. EFV's do not prevent accidents; instead, they help mitigate the consequences of accidents where there has been a substantial or catastrophic line break.

The following list contains the types of customer service lines that require an Excess Flow Valve.

- A service line to a single family residence served by a single service line.
- Branched service lines to a single family residence installed concurrently with the primary single family residence (a single EFV may be installed to protect both lines);
- Branched service lines to a single family residence installed off a previously installed SFR service line that does not contain an EFV;
- Multifamily installations, including duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes and other small multifamily buildings (e.g., apartments, condominiums) with known customer loads at time of installation, based on installed meter capacity, up to 1,000 SCFH per service; and
- A single, small commercial customer served by a single service line, with a known customer load at time of service installation, based on installed meter capacity, of up to 1,000 SCFH per service.

All rough grading of the customer service line location needs to be completed before the customer service line is installed to ensure proper installation depth is maintained.

The customer service line should be buried at around 18" deep. (minimum is 12").

The customer service line shall not be laid in a common ditch with any of the following:

- Electric lines or conduit.
- Telephone lines or conduit.
- Water lines.
- Sewer lines.
- Or any other underground utility.

Proper clearance between other buried lines must be maintained to ensure safety.

#### Typical Sequence of Events for Establishing Gas Service

- 1- Request service/make application – Acquire an Application Packet from Piedmont Gas Company, fill out completely and return to company.
- 2- Acceptance - company approval must be obtained before installing the customer service line. If a gas main extension is required, Piedmont Gas Company will provide you with details.
- 3- Install Customer Service Line (additional information in **CUSTOMER SERVICE LINE INSTALLATION**).
- 4- Test & Tie-In - after the service line is completed Piedmont Gas Company will pressure test the service line and make the connection to the curb stop valve.
- 5- Install the Meter - Piedmont Gas Company will install the gas meter after the service line is tested and tied in, and house piping is tested and approved. (see additional instructions for Installing the Meter).

The above is a Typical, but by no means the only sequence of events for establishing gas service.

Multiple meter installations and or commercial/industrial customers may vary from the above, any questions please contact Piedmont Gas Company.

If the customer service line is being installed to a mobile home it will be necessary to install a remote meter support post to the anodeless riser at the meter location, and an approved flexible connector between the house piping and the Meter Manifold Assembly (see attached drawing).

### **Installation of the meter**

The meter will be installed after the following requirements have been met:

- 1 – The customer service line installation is completed and tied into the main line.
- 2 – Your house piping is installed, and at least one gas appliance should be hooked up and ready for use. All gas appliances shall have a shut off valve installed ahead of the appliance. (we inspect and test all gas piping and appliances installed at the time of meter installation).
- 3 – The meter manifold is plumbed to the customer service line riser and your house piping.
- 4 – You have notified Piedmont Gas Company that you are ready to have your meter installed.  
A field technician will contact you to make an appointment to install the meter. You or someone representing you should be on the premises to enable our technician access to the property to visually inspect your house piping and perform the pressure test. After the piping is tested and found to be free of leaks the company will then install the meter.
- 5 – All fees and installation charges must be paid before the service will be turned on.

### **NOTES:**

Piedmont Gas Company will furnish the meter at no cost, and shall remain property of the company.

There are no fees for the initial customer service line testing or house piping testing, however in the case of leak, error, or other unsatisfactory condition resulting in the disapproval of the line or piping by the company, the necessary correction shall be made at the customer's expense, then the line or piping will be inspected and tested again by the company. The additional inspection and testing required after correction, shall be subject to a charge covering the cost thereof.

If you have any questions during the installation process please feel free to call us, we will gladly answer questions you may have.

### **Important Steps to Remember**

The following steps are common oversights that typically result in delays to establishing your service.

- final grade of yard/foundation not completed at service line location
- improper equipment installed
- house line not plumbed into meter manifold
- house line has open ends on piping
- no valve installed ahead of an appliance
- if an appliance is not yet installed the appliance valve must be plugged
- outstanding fees

We highly value your business and look forward to serving you. We believe this information will result in better scheduling efficiency and improved response time. If you have any questions, or need further assistance, please contact us at 330-339-5454.



## **CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!!**

The Ohio Revised Code (3781.25) states that anyone performing any type of excavation must contact the Ohio Utilities Protection Services (OUPS) “one-call” number by dialing **811** or (800) 362-2764 at least 48 hours, but no more than ten working days (excluding weekends and holidays) prior to performing any excavation. OUPS will then notify all members that have facilities in the area of the excavation so they can mark any underground facilities they have in the affected area. Piedmont Gas Company uses yellow paint, yellow flags, yellow stakes or any combination thereof. You can view the Ohio Utility Protection Service (OUPS) web site at [www.ohio811.org](http://www.ohio811.org) to see the full copy of the law and other valuable information. Calling **811** is the law, and this is a free service.

## **METER READING**

At a minimum, natural gas companies must read your meter once every 12 months. During the summer months and periods of inclement weather, or if we cannot obtain access to your meter, we may estimate your gas usage. The estimates we use are based on the past history and current weather conditions. However, any difference between the estimated usage and your actual usage will be billed when the next actual meter reading is obtained. The account will not be billed for gas usage until the actual usage exceeds the estimated usage.

## **EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION**

There are times when our employees will need to be on your property or gain access into your home. All of our company personnel carry photo identification and would be happy to show it to you upon request. If you are not sure about an employee’s identification, or to verify work being done in or around your home, call us at (330) 339-5454. Most of our employees also drive vehicles with a company logo and are easily identified.

## **METER TESTING**

Upon reasonable request by a Customer, the Company shall test its meter to verify its compliance with Section 4933.09, Revised Code, within thirty business days after the date of request. The Customer or the Customer’s representative may be present when the meter test is performed at the Customers request. A written explanation of the test results shall be provided to the Customer within ten business days of the completion of the test. The Company shall notify the Customer of applicable charges prior to the test (per section 4933.09). The test will be completed with a meter-prover tested and sealed by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio. If the meter is found to be no greater than plus or minus three percent, then the customer shall pay the fee and the costs of testing and removing the meter. If the meter is found to be greater than plus or minus three percent, the Company shall not charge a fee or recover any testing expenses, and credit any overpayment by the customer at the rates in effect during the period the meter was running fast. The Company shall also provide a properly functioning meter without charge to the Customer. If the Company and Customer cannot reasonably establish the approximate period of the meter inaccuracy, it will be determined to be the most recent twelve months or the period since the date of the most recent meter test performed, whichever is less.

This section does not apply in the event there has been either tampering or an unauthorized reconnection of the meter or related equipment during the subject period of time.

## **USAGE HISTORY**

All Piedmont Gas Company bills will show the previous 13 months of natural gas usage along with an average monthly usage. If you would like more than the previous 13 months usage history, please contact our office and we will supply that information to you either orally or written.

## **DEPOSIT REQUIREMENTS**

New customers must meet one or more of the following criteria to establish credit:

- The customer is a property owner or meets the legally-accepted practices to verify credit.
- The customer demonstrates financial responsibility through a variety of information including, but not limited to, the name of their employer, place of employment, position, length of service, letters of reference and names of credit cards.
- The customer has had a prior account with Piedmont Gas Company or another natural gas public utility, for the same class of service within the past two years and, in the prior year of service, did not have a late bill more than twice and did not have service disconnected for nonpayment, fraud or tampering. If service was with another natural gas public utility a letter of credit must be provided.
- The customer can provide a guarantor, someone with good credit, who will pay up to 60 days of service if they fail to pay their bill.

If you do not meet any of these criteria, you may be required to pay a deposit to establish credit. An additional deposit may be required if there are multiple missed payments or if the gas is shut off due to nonpayment. The deposit will then be applied after six consecutive, timely payments to the customer account. If your deposit is not returned after six months, we will credit your account with interest equal to three percent of the total deposit.

## **HOW MUCH DOES MY GAS COST?**

Your cost for natural gas is based on several factors. The total charges on your bill are comprised of the consumption during the current billing cycle multiplied by the current Gas Cost Recovery Rate, Delivery Charge, MCF Excise Tax and Uncollectible Expense Rider along with a Gross Receipts Tax calculated on the total monthly charges.

To find out the current Gas Cost Recovery Rate, please contact our office. This rate is adjusted on a monthly basis through a filing with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

Piedmont Gas Company does **NOT** participate in the Energy Choice program that allows the customer to choose their gas supplier. This program is only available through the major natural gas utilities in Ohio.

## **MONTHLY SERVICE CHARGE**

In addition to the charges determined from the above rates, each residential customer or small (residential type meter) non-residential space heating customer must pay a monthly service charge of \$6.50 for each billing month plus applicable taxes. Each agricultural or large (larger than residential type meter) non-residential space heating customer must pay a monthly service charge of \$36.50 for each billing month plus applicable taxes.

## **DELAYED PAYMENT CHARGE**

A delayed payment charge of one percent (1%) per month will be added to the unpaid balance in the account if not paid within thirty-two (32) days after receipt thereof by Customer.

## **PAYMENT PLANS**

Piedmont Gas Company makes every attempt to assist customers who are having difficulty paying their gas bills. If you are behind on your bill and your service has not been disconnected for nonpayment, please call our office to make special arrangements. We currently offer the 1/3 Payment Plan, 1/6 Payment Plan and 1/9 Payment Plan.

## **MEDICAL CERTIFICATIONS**

If a member of your household has a serious medical condition, a Medical Certificate can delay the disconnection of your gas service for 30 days. Piedmont Gas Company will fax a form to your licensed health care professional, who must complete, sign and return the certificate to us before the shut-off date. If your gas service has been disconnected, a Medical Certificate may be used to have your service restored. Medical Certificate's may be used three times in a rolling 12-month period.

## **HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HEAP)**

If your total annual household income is at or below 175% of the federal poverty guidelines and you are responsible for paying your household's heating costs, you may be eligible for financial assistance through HEAP. Applications are accepted between September 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>. If you received assistance last year, you will automatically receive an application in the mail. Application forms are available at your local Community Action Agencies, Area Agencies on Aging, County Department of Job and Family Service, local libraries, or by visiting the Ohio Development Services Agency website at [www.development.ohio.gov](http://www.development.ohio.gov). A fact sheet is available from the PUCO with details and eligibility requirements for these assistance programs. To obtain a copy, call the PUCO at (800) 686-7826 or visit the consumer section of [www.puco.ohio.gov](http://www.puco.ohio.gov).

## **WINTER CRISIS PROGRAM**

The Winter Crisis Program provides a one-time credit up to \$175.00 each heating season to qualified, low-income customers to maintain or restore gas service. In certain cases, the Winter Crisis Program can also be used for heating system repairs. The application period for the Winter Crisis Program is November 1<sup>st</sup> through March 31<sup>st</sup>. Applications must be completed at a Community Action Agency. Recipients are also required to sign up for all public energy assistance and weatherization programs for which they are eligible.

## **HOME WEATHERIZATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HWAP)**

Ohio's Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) is a federally funded low-income residential energy efficiency program. The program reduces low-income households' energy use, thus creating more affordable housing for those in most need. Services include attic, wall and basement insulation, blower-door-guided air leakage reduction; heating system repairs or replacements; and health and safety testing and inspections. All measures are provided based on an on-site energy audit and on cost-effective guidelines developed using the NEAT computerized energy audit. Individualized client education is an important component of the program.

Households at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines, PIPP participants, PIPP eligible households or households participating Supplemental Security Income qualify for this no-cost program. After weatherization, households that heat with natural gas reduce space heating consumption by an average of 24.7 percent, and electrically heated homes reduce usage by 13 percent on average. HWAP participants increased the percentage of utility bills that they pay and the rate of disconnections of utility service for this group decreased by 50 percent.

For more information, contact the Ohio Development Services Agency by calling (800) 282-0880, TDD (800) 686-1557 or by writing to P.O. Box 1240, Columbus, Ohio 43266-0583. HWAP Applications may also be downloaded from the Ohio Development Services Agency website, [www.development.ohio.gov](http://www.development.ohio.gov) or picked up at local Community Action Agencies, post offices and libraries.



## **DISCONNECTION OF SERVICE**

Piedmont Gas Company provides our customers with continuous service when bills are paid on time, payment arrangements are kept, and operating rules are observed. We can disconnect service and/or remove from the premises of consumer, the meter and any other property belonging to Piedmont Gas, in accordance with PUCO rules and regulations for any of the following reasons or purposes:

1. Refusing access to Piedmont Gas personnel;
2. Non-payment of bills for gas or transportation, when due;
3. Failure to furnish or maintain required security;
4. Non-use of gas or transportation service;
5. Theft of service, tampering of property, or fraudulent representation or practice;
6. Whenever deemed necessary by Piedmont Gas for safety reasons;
7. Violation of any of these Rules and Regulations, any Service Agreement, or the General Terms and Conditions applicable to any such Agreement;
8. Customer request;
9. Customer vacates premises;
10. When a safety hazard or emergency may threaten the health and safety of others or other property;
11. When the use of gas adversely affects the service of others;
12. Violation of the law;
13. Failure to comply with a contract or tariff,

## **FIELD TRIP CHARGE**

When a Company representative is dispatched to a customer's premises to disconnect service for non-payment, the customer may avoid disconnection by paying the full amount owed. However, there will be a \$25.00 field collection charge for accepting such payment due in addition to the past due balance.

## **RECONNECTION OF SERVICE**

If service is disconnected for non-payment, full payment of your past due amount, security deposit and a reconnection fee of \$50.00 will apply. If payment is made before 12:30 p.m., your service will be restored on the same day. If your payment is made after 12:30 p.m., service will be reconnected on the next business day. We do not reconnect disconnected services after normal business hours or on weekends.

## **PAYMENT OF BILLS**

Natural gas bills are mailed monthly. The due date on your bill applies to the current month's charges only. Any past due account balances are due immediately to avoid possible disconnection of service. If you are unable to pay, please contact us immediately to make payment arrangements.

For your convenience Piedmont Gas Company offers our customers several methods to pay your bill. Bills can be paid at Piedmont Gas Company during its regular office hours or to any one of the Company's authorized collecting agents during the regular hours of such agent. Authorized collecting agents include Mako's Pharmacy in Uhrichsville, Ohio and Discount Drug Mart in Dover, Ohio or New Philadelphia, Ohio. We also accept payment by phone using Visa, Mastercard, Discover or American Express. If you need to pay after business hours, there is a Payment Drop Box located below our mailbox in the front of the office. Payments may also be sent to us by mail or payments can be made by visiting [www.piedgas.com](http://www.piedgas.com) and clicking on the "Pay Your Bill" link. If you would like your monthly bill to be paid automatically using your checking account or credit card, please call our office and request the appropriate form to enroll in this program. The forms are also available on our website at [www.piedgas.com](http://www.piedgas.com).

## **RETURNED CHECK FEE**

If a check is returned due to non-sufficient funds or a closed account, you will be charged a \$30.00 returned check charge. We will mail a notice allowing 10 days for repayment of the returned check plus the additional returned check charge. Repayment must be made in cash, credit/debit card or money order only.

## **CUSTOMER PRIVACY RIGHTS**

Piedmont Gas Company shall not disclose a customer's account number, without the customer's affirmative consent except for purposes of commercial collection and credit reporting, percentage of income payment plan aggregation and governmental aggregation. In addition, a customer's social security number shall not be used for any other purpose other than to perform a credit check.

## **COMPLAINT PROCEDURES**

If you have a question or complaint, please call Piedmont Gas Company first at (330) 339-5454 or toll free at (800) 734-5724, between 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

We ensure that you will be assisted in a timely manner. To submit a question or complaint in writing, you may do so by including your account number and as much information about your situation as possible, and mail to Piedmont Gas Company at 159 Stonecreek Road NW, New Philadelphia, Ohio 44663.

If your complaint is not resolved after you have called or written Piedmont Gas Company, or for general utility information, residential and business customers may contact the public utilities commission of Ohio (PUCO) for assistance at, 1-800-686-7826 (toll free) from eight a.m. to five p.m. weekdays, or at <http://www.puco.ohio.gov>. Hearing or speech impaired customers may contact the PUCO via 7-1-1 (Ohio relay service).

The Ohio consumers' counsel (OCC) represents residential utility customers in matters before the PUCO. The OCC can be contacted at 1-877-742-5622 (toll free) from eight a.m. to five p.m. weekdays, or at <http://www.pickocc.org>.