

Cold Weather Rule Now In Affect

(KNZA)--Now that November arrives, the Cold Weather Rule goes into affect for Kansas, ensuring that state residents remain warm in their homes during the winter.

Jesse Borjon, Director of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection for the Kansas Corporation Commission says the rule has been in place for nearly 3 decades, and prohibits utility companies from disconnecting service in the coldest of conditions(Play Audio)

Utility companies are forbidden to disconnect natural gas or electric service until temperatures are forecast to be above 35 degrees for the next 48 hours; requires utility companies to contact the customer, by phone or in person, 24 hours prior to a disconnect; and they are prohibited from cutting service when temperatures are forecast to be at, or below, 35 degrees over a 24 hour period.

Additionally, utility companies are required to offer a 12 month payment plan to allow customers to maintain, or re-establish service.

Any residential customer with a past due balance will qualify for payment arrangements under the rule, but it is their responsibility to contact the gas or electric company to make those arrangements.

The Cold Weather Rule prohibits utility companies from disconnecting a customer's natural gas or electric service during periods of extreme cold. The Rule requires utility companies to offer a 12-month payment plan to allow consumers to maintain or re-establish utility service.

Disconnection Conditions:

- Utility companies may not initiate disconnection until temperatures are forecast to be above 35 degrees for the next 48 hours.
- Utility companies must contact the customer by phone or in-person 24 hours before disconnecting service.
- Utility companies are prohibited from disconnecting a customer's service when temperatures are forecast to be at or below 35 degrees over the next 24 hours.

The KCC wants Kansans to have the electric and gas service needed to keep their homes warm during the winter months. The KCC also recognizes the customer's responsibility to make arrangements to pay for that service. The Cold Weather Rule was designed in 1983 to ensure that both goals are met. Any residential customer with a past due balance will qualify for payment arrangements under the Rule. However, it is the customer's responsibility to contact the gas or electric company to make those arrangements.

Payment Plan conditions to maintain or restore service:

- Customers must contact their utility company and inform that they cannot pay their bill in full.
- Customers must agree to pay 1/12th of the total amount owed, 1/12th of the current bill, the full amount of any disconnection or reconnection fee, plus any applicable deposit to the utility.
- Customers must agree to pay the remaining balance in equal payments over the next 11 months, in addition to their current monthly bill.

The Cold Weather Rule applies only to residential customers of electric and natural gas utility companies under the KCC's jurisdiction. For a complete list of utilities regulated by the KCC visit: http://kcc.ks.gov/pi/jurisdictional_utilities.htm.

More information about the Cold Weather Rule is available at: http://kcc.ks.gov/pi/cwr_english.htm. Kansans may also contact their local utility company or the KCC's Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection at [\(800\)662-0027](tel:8006620027).

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