Nonresidential Rights and Responsibilities for National Grid Customers in New York State

Upstate New York

As a National Grid customer receiving nonresidential service in New York state, you have certain rights and responsibilities. This pamphlet summarizes your rights, as well as your responsibilities and obligations. If anything in this pamphlet is not clear, you may call our Commercial and Industrial Business Team at 1-800-664-6729, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., to discuss your concerns. Our tariff is available for review at the New York State Public Service Commission (PSC) headquarters in Albany or on our website at www.nationalgridus.com/rates&pricing. These rights and responsibilities are provided for in Part 15, Rules of Subchapter B, Chapter 1, Title 16 of the New York Code of Rules and Regulations.

Applications for Nonresidential Service

You may apply for service by telephone. However, you may be required to complete a written application for service.

Following the receipt of a completed application, we will either provide or deny service within 10 days, unless prevented by circumstances beyond our control. If service is denied, we will provide you with a written statement containing our reasons for denial, what you must do to qualify for service and notice of your right to appeal to the PSC. If you qualify for service, you may be required to pay any past due amounts for which you are responsible and comply with all other customer responsibilities as required by our tariff before service is turned on. Additionally, you may be asked to provide us with the name of the individual who controls access to our meters.

Eligibility for Residential Rates

Certain religious organizations, farms, community residences as defined by the Hygiene Law, and public or halls owned or leased by a not-for-profit corporation that is a veterans' organization, may be eligible for billing at residential rates. Residential rates may be more beneficial depending on factors including the type (gas or electric), amount and pattern of usage. In general, National Grid requires evidence of eligibility. For more information about eligibility requirements, call 1-800-664-6729, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Deposit Policy

When you apply for service, National Grid may require that you pay a security deposit prior to establishing service in your name. Deposits may also be required from existing customers who have either become delinquent or whose reliable evidence exists (e.g., are likely to default on payment of billed service charges). Deposits also may be obtained from customers who have filed for reorganization or bankruptcy and from some customers who are backbilled for service provided through tampered equipment.

You can pay a security deposit by cash, check or by an alternative method such as a surety bond or letter of credit. Please note that National Grid pays interest only on security deposits that are paid by cash or check. Such deposits are held at a rate of interest set by the PSC. Interest is either paid to you at the time your deposit is returned or annually applied to your account as a credit for as long as we continue to hold the deposit. Deposits will be returned after three years if you have paid all of your service bills on time and there is no evidence that your credit rating has declined.

Security deposit amounts will ordinarily be twice the cost of your average monthly bill. In the case of customers whose usage varies widely, however, the amount can be twice the cost of your average monthly bill during the peak usage season.

Meter Reading and Billing Policy

We are responsible for supplying gas and/or electric service to our customers in a reliable manner and accurately billing customers for the service they use.

You, as our customer, are responsible for arranging access to our meters and have an obligation to pay your utility bills on time. Here are some important highlights of our billing policies and procedures:

When To Pay - National Grid bills are due and payable when received, or in the form of charges not previously billed. Many estimated bills will also contain the Access to Meter notices mentioned previously.

Backbilling - If we send you a bill for charges not previously billed, the bill will contain an explanation of our reasons for the backbilling.

Additionally, customer receiving backbills for a period of time exceeding one month have the right to request a billing statement showing where the charges were calculated and will be offered the opportunity to pay over a period of time by entering into a Deferred Payment Agreement.

Deferred Payment Agreements

Nonresidential customers experiencing financial difficulty may qualify for arrangements to pay past due bills over a specified period of time. If you are eligible for this type of agreement, we have the right to a down payment of 50 percent of your outstanding balance or twice your average monthly usage, whichever is greater. If you contact us prior to a scheduled field visit, the down payment need not exceed 30 percent of the outstanding balance or twice your average monthly usage, whichever is greater. If you are eligible, and enter into a Deferred Payment Agreement with us, you will be required to pay the following:

1. The down payment required.
2. All future current bills on time.
3. The monthly installment amounts on time.

You also may be required to pay:

1. Late payment charges on the remaining past due balance.
2. A security deposit that can be paid in 10 equal installments, with 50 percent down and two monthly payments of the balance.

The best way to determine if you are eligible for this type of arrangement is to contact us by phone.

If you are backbilled for an amount in excess of $100, you may request to pay in installments by entering into a Deferred Payment Agreement. Agreements on backbilled amounts require payment of current bills on time and a monthly installment amount on the backbill.
Right to Inspect - National Grid personnel, or agents acting on our behalf, may enter to inspect meters and other equipment at all reasonable times, provided they can produce a photo identification badge that confirms they are authorized to do so. A customer who prevents or hinders such an inspection may be billed a $100 penalty for each such offense.

Duty to Inspect - We have a duty to perform a field inspection of our equipment when we have received a reasonable request from a customer, a report of possible metering problems or a directive from the PSC. It is our obligation to provide such an inspection within 60 days of receipt of the request, unless circumstances beyond our control prevent completion of the inspection.

Late Payment and Other Charges
We may impose a continuing late payment charge of 1.5 percent per month on any unpaid balance of past service bills, any unpaid late payment charges applied to previous bills, amounts previously unbilled where service was provided through tampered equipment or the balance due under a Deferred Payment Agreement.

We may also impose a reasonable charge for other lawful purposes, such as handling a dishonored check, reestablishment of service, customer costs or customer failure to provide access to meters or other Company equipment.

Final Termination Notice, Service Turn Off and Turn On Procedures
If you fail to pay past due bills, we may turn off your service after we have given the required notice. Some nonresidential customers, however, qualify for Home Energy Fair Practices Act (HEPFA) special protections. To find out if you qualify for these protections, please contact us.

Final Termination Notice - A Final Termination Notice may be sent if your bill is not paid and 23 days have elapsed since the date it was sent. If a Final Termination Notice is personally served on you, your service may be shut off in five days; if the Final Termination Notice is mailed, service may be shut off in eight days from the mailing date. The notice will tell you the amount you may be shut off for, the earliest date service may be shut off, and if you can contact us to discuss the payment of the bill and what procedures (both National Grid and PSC) are available should you have a complaint or feel there may be a problem with your bill.

Termination of Service - We are allowed to shut off service for nonpayment of bills before 1 a.m., and 6 p.m. through Friday. We cannot shut off service on Saturday or Sunday, a public holiday as defined in the General Construction Law of the State or on any day that either our offices or the PSC offices are closed. At the time service is to be shut off, you have the right to pay the Company field representative to avoid disconnection. If you have paid us with a dishonored check in the last 24 months, however, we have the right to accept only a certified check, money order or cash as payment. If service is to be shut off, you have the right to have a copy of the PSC (Public Service Commission) Termination of Service and Meet Peak Consumption Periods.

Our customer service representatives will do their best to handle your inquiry promptly and considerately. If, however, you are not satisfied by our decision, the case may be referred to a supervisor. Failure by the landlord to cooperate with our request to investigate may still result in our determination of a “shared meter” condition. The landlord fails to take any action within 120 days of a “shared meter” determination, the law requires that National Grid establish an account in the landlord’s name for all future service measured on the shared meter until they meet compliance requirements. Under certain circumstances, the landlord may be billed for other charges, where applicable, regardless if the situation is corrected or not.

More information about shared metering can be obtained at www.nationalgridus.com/sharedmeter or by calling 1-800-642-4272.

Complaint Handling Procedures
Contact National Grid as soon as possible if you have any complaints, questions or problems about your service. You are entitled to a prompt answer and National Grid representatives are available to help you by phone 24 hours a day. Call our Customer Service Contact Center at 1-800-642-4272. You may also call our Commercial and Industrial Business Team at 1-800-664-6729, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Emergency service is available 24 hours a day, every day. In a life-threatening gas or electric emergency, please call 1-800-892-2345.

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