

## **OHIO GAS COMPANY - - A GUIDE TO OUR SERVICES “YOUR RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES”**

We're glad to have the opportunity to have you as our customer, and look forward to providing you with reliable, dependable and safe natural gas services. Our programs and policies are designed to do this and to make it as easy and convenient for you to do business with us, as possible.

Please read through this pamphlet, outlining our programs and services. Your rights as an Ohio Gas Company customer are also explained. If you have any questions or concerns after reviewing this material, please give us a call. Our telephone number is on your monthly statement, included in your local telephone directory and displayed on page 5 of this document.

To review a copy of the complete natural gas service standards as filed with the public utilities commission of Ohio (PUCO) visit <http://www.puco.ohio.gov> or contact the PUCO toll free at 1-800-686-7826, from eight a.m. to five p.m. weekdays.

### **FOR YOUR SAFETY**

**Gas Odor:** Natural gas has a distinctive odor added to it to alert you to a leak in or around your home. If you smell gas leave the building immediately. Leave the door open and don't use any light switches, phones or matches. Call our 24-hour emergency number 1-800-331-7396 or 419-636-3642 from a nearby phone and wait for our personnel to arrive and assess the situation.

**Call Before You Dig:** Ohio Revised Code states you are responsible for calling the Ohio Utilities Protection Service (OUPS) 48 hours but no more than 10 days before digging so underground utilities on your property can be marked. If you're planning a home construction or landscaping project, call OUPS at 1-800-362-2764 or 811, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, before you start to dig. A representative of Ohio Gas Company will mark the approximate location of the underground gas line up to the meter on your property at no cost to you. If you don't call and the gas line is damaged, you will be liable for all damages and injuries. For more information about Digging Safely, visit <http://www.oups.org>.

### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR GAS PIPING**

It is the policy of Ohio Gas Company to retain ownership and maintenance responsibilities of the gas service line, up to and including the gas meter, to ensure the safety of our customers. This allows Ohio Gas Company to maintain control over the design, materials used, installation and testing of the service line. Ohio Gas Company regularly performs leakage surveys over our gas mains and service lines utilizing specialized leak detection equipment. While leaks are rare, it is still important to know the signs of a gas leak and to trust your senses. To help you smell a leak from a gas line or appliance, a familiar odor like rotten eggs is added by injecting a chemical called mercaptan, into the natural gas. Another sign might be blowing dirt or bubbling water that you see in the vicinity of an underground gas line. If you detect a faint odor of natural gas, call Ohio Gas Company at 1-800-331-7396. If you detect a strong odor or hear a hissing sound, evacuate the building and call 911 and call Ohio Gas Company from a neighbor's phone. To learn more about natural gas safety, visit <http://www.safegasohio.org>.

The customer is responsible for maintenance of customer owned piping, which is all gas piping from the outlet of the meter to all gas appliances and is subject to potential hazards of corrosion and leakage. For your safety, all customer gas piping should be periodically inspected for leaks. If the piping is metallic, it should also be periodically inspected for corrosion. If an unsafe condition is found, the gas piping will need to be promptly repaired. To obtain help, a qualified plumber or contractor can assist you in inspecting and repairing such pipelines. When digging near buried gas piping, the piping must be located in advance and digging should be done by hand.

### **FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE**

- **Payments**

Payments can be mailed to our office, using our remittance address, PO Box 49370, San Jose, CA. 95161-9370. Another option for payment is to sign up for "ACH" and have your payment automatically deducted from either your checking or savings account. First Billing is a third party agent that takes payments on behalf of Ohio Gas Company. There is a service fee of \$1.50 for e-check and \$2.75 for Debit/Credit Card payments.

- **Automatic Bill Payment Plan**

You can authorize your bank, credit union, or savings and loan to automatically deduct your gas bill from your checking or savings account. You will still receive your monthly bill, so that you can review it and file it with your other important papers.

To apply, call us and we'll send you the necessary paperwork, or you can go to our website at <http://www.ohiogas.com>.

- **Credit Card Payments**

First Billing Services is an agent for Ohio Gas that takes Credit Card, Debit Card, ATM & Check payments for your gas bill. There is a \$2.75 fee for this service. Call us at 1-800-331-7396 or use our web site [http:// www.ohiogas.com](http://www.ohiogas.com) or call First Billing Services at 1-877-978-2295.

- **Budget Plan**

Our annual Budget Plan starts in September. The enrollment form will be enclosed with your July billing. You'll pay the same amount for your gas bill each month. We'll figure your annual energy bill based on the past usage at the home or business, taking into consideration weather conditions and the cost of gas. Then we'll divide this amount into 12 equal payments, which will be the amount of your budget plan payment amount. In April, you may see a recalculated budget amount on your monthly bill. If your budget plan amount was calculated either too high or too low, we will adjust your budget amount. There will be a message on your billing stating that your budget payment amount was adjusted.

- **Payment Assistance**

Before your gas bill payment becomes a problem, please call us. There are special payment plans available with Ohio Gas Company and we also have a list of agencies that can help you with payment of your utility bills. Call the office to have a customer service representative explain the payment plans options that are available.

If you receive a disconnect notice between November 1 and April 15, contact Ohio Gas Company for a listing of agencies in your area who will assist in the payment of past due utility bills.

**The Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA) offers several programs to help low-income customers pay their utility bills and improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Customers may apply for the following ODSA programs:**

Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) is a federally funded program that provides financial assistance to eligible consumers with their winter heating bills.

Home Weatherization Assistance Program (HWAP) is a federally funded program designed to reduce the energy consumption measures in eligible homes at no cost to residents. The qualification guidelines are listed at <http://energyhelp.ohio.gov>.

To apply for any of the above-mentioned programs, please contact the ODSA at <http://energyhelp.ohio.gov> or call 1-800-282-0880. Hearing impaired customers with TDD's can call 1-800-686-1557. You may also contact your local Ohio Department of Job and Family Services for additional assistance. Ohio Gas Company can mail an application to you at your request.

Payment Plans: You may avoid disconnection by entering into a payment arrangement with Ohio Gas Company. Reduced payments can be made and disconnection avoided, if you are eligible for the Percent of Income Payment Plan (PIPP PLUS) or another extended payment plan, and make payments as agreed upon. The One-Sixth Payment Plan allows you to pay one-sixth of your past due balance plus your current bill each month. The One-Ninth Payment Plan requires nine equal monthly payments on the arrearages in addition to a budget payment plan for the projected monthly bills. The budget portion of the payments may be adjusted periodically during the nine-month period as needed. Contact the Ohio Gas Company or your local Community Action Agency for more information.

PIPP PLUS is available if your total income is at or below 150 percent of the Federal poverty level. PIPP PLUS requires you to pay a percentage of your total monthly household income to your utility company. This program does not reduce or waive energy costs; it only establishes a payment plan to allow you to maintain your utility service.

Special Winter Plans: From November 1st through April 15th, Ohio Gas Company also offers a plan that allows customers to pay one-third of the total balance due each month (past due amount plus the current bill). Additionally, one time during the winter heating season, typically from November 1<sup>st</sup> through April 15<sup>th</sup>, you may pay \$175 and apply for available energy assistance programs and/or make a payment arrangement with Ohio Gas Company for any remaining balances to maintain or reconnect your service. If applicable, the appropriate reconnection fee will be billed. Customers who pay \$175 to maintain or reconnect service must pay the monthly payment plan amount agreed upon with Ohio Gas Company to maintain gas service. Please contact Ohio Gas Company to utilize the \$175 option.

If you are eligible, you may receive assistance through the Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (EHEAP) or other energy assistance programs. EHEAP provides financial assistance once per heating season to eligible households that are disconnected, seeking disconnection avoidance or to connect. Contact your local Community Action Agency for an appointment.

- **Medical Emergency**

A Medical certification is available to our residential consumers whose health would be impaired by termination of gas service to their residence. Under this program, if a medical professional (including a licensed physician, physician assistant, clinical nurse specialist, certified nurse practitioner, certified nurse-midwife, or a local board of health physician) certifies that termination of gas service to the permanent residence of the consumer would pose a special danger to the consumer's health, the gas service cannot be disconnected the thirty days following certification. Certification can be renewed two additional times for thirty days each. The total certification period may not exceed ninety days per household in any twelve-month period. Application forms for the medical certification program are available at Ohio Gas Company at 200 W. High Street, Bryan, Ohio 43506, telephone 1-800-331-7396 or 419-636-1117

### **INSTALLATION OF SERVICE**

Please call 72 hours in advance when requesting a new gas service account, when no installation of piping is required; or at least 20 business days in advance when a gas service line installation is required.

### **TO PREVENT SHUT-OFF OF SERVICE**

You can avoid termination of gas service for non-payment by paying the amount stated on your monthly statement or by showing proof that you have paid any past-due amount.

You can also avoid disconnection of gas service for non-payment by contacting Ohio Gas Company, promptly before the disconnect date, to make payment arrangements.

### **NOTICE OF SERVICE SHUT-OFF**

Before we terminate service in the winter heating season for non-payment, November 1<sup>st</sup> thru April 15th, we will mail your 10 Day-Disconnect Notice. This notice indicates the scheduled date that service may be shut off and how to avoid disconnection of service, during the winter heating season. During the non-heating season, **NO SEPARATE** notification will be sent or delivered to you prior to disconnection of your gas service. Your DISCONNECT NOTICE gas bill will state the following on it. **“Your account is delinquent. If your balance forward amount, as noted above, is not paid by due date on this bill, your service will be subject to disconnection after such date”**.

If the landlord is responsible for paying the gas bill for a single-metered building which services two or more families, and Ohio Gas Company has been notified that this is a multi-family dwelling; each tenant will be notified of impending disconnection at least ten days in advance of the termination of gas service.

### **WHEN SERVICE IS TURNED OFF**

We will leave a notice at your home informing you that your gas service has been turned off. You can arrange to have gas service restored by contacting us at the phone number shown on the notice.

Before we restore gas service, you must pay the delinquent amount as stated on the disconnection notice, plus a reconnect fee and a security deposit (unless we already have a security deposit).

Your service can be restored the same day you call in for reconnection if the following conditions have been met.

- You have called in before 12:30 P.M.
- You have made payment arrangements and paid the amount agreed upon between you and Ohio Gas Company representative.
- An adult will need to be at the service location so that we can enter the building to light and pressure check the fuel lines and, if necessary, to pick up the payment amount (either money order or certified check).
- Your gas has been disconnected less than 10 business days.

If you've called after 12:30 P.M or your gas has been off over 10 business days, service will be restored within 2 days, excluding company holidays and week-ends.

## SECURITY DEPOSITS

Normally we do not require a security deposit on our residential customers as a condition for providing or continuing service. However, a deposit may be required under the following conditions.

- You had service with Ohio Gas Company and had your service disconnected because of nonpayment within the previous 12 months.
- You have written one or more insufficient funds checks, or closed account checks in the past 12 months to the Ohio Gas Company.
- You have tampered with the gas utility service line or meter.
- You misrepresented to the Ohio Gas Company the identity of the consumer or customer at the service location.
- You owe a past due amount to Ohio Gas Company.
- You have not established good payment history.

The amount of the security deposit depends on the amount of gas used at the service location. When a deposit is required because of an unpaid bill, the customer must pay the unpaid bill in addition to the security deposit before gas service will be provided.

Interest will be earned on the security deposit at the rate of 3% per annum beginning after the deposit has been held for 180 days. Interest will be accrued back to the date it was received after 180 days, but deposits refunded back to the customer before the 180 days will receive no interest. All accounts will be reviewed monthly, and an account in good standing will have the deposit and interest accrued applied on their monthly bill after it has been held for at least 12 months. Accounts not having established good payment history will have the deposit held on them until, either service is discontinued with Ohio Gas Company, or good payment history is established. A gas account that is turned off at the customer's request; will have the security deposit and accrued interest applied onto the final billing.

## YOUR MONTHLY BILL

Each month we'll send you a bill for the natural gas you've used. It will show the date your payment is due.

- **Late Payments**

Your monthly payment is due within 15 days from the date of the postmark on your bill. If you make a payment after the due date shown on your bill, you will be assessed a late fee of 5% of your current bill amount.

There may be occasions when you might not be able to make your payment by the due date. When this happens, please call us and we will gladly work out a payment arrangement with you.

- **Understanding your gas bill**

<b>Account#:</b>	Unique number that we assign to your gas service.
<b>Amount Due:</b>	Monthly payment amount due.
<b>Due Date:</b>	Date payment must be received by in order to avoid a late fee.
<b>Gross Amount:</b>	Monthly payment with late fee included.
<b>Previous Balance:</b>	Balance on your account from last billing information
<b>Debit/Credit Adj:</b>	Any adjustments posted on your account since last month's billing.
<b>Payments:</b>	Any payment received since last month's billing
<b>Balance Forward:</b>	Balance on your account prior to this month's billing
<b>GCR</b>	Cost of the gas you used during the billing period
<b>"CCF"</b>	The amount of gas used during the billing period in hundred cubic feet.
<b>Base Fee</b>	Monthly service fee
<b>Base Rate</b>	Cost of providing natural gas service
<b>Constant</b>	Meter correcting factor
<b>Historical Usage (CCF)</b>	Usage for previous 12 months with total and monthly average

The base rate we charge for natural gas includes the cost of providing natural gas service to your home, but not the actual cost of the gas itself. You are paying the cost of the natural gas with no "mark up". This price may be adjusted monthly depending upon market conditions. The cost of the gas is shown as Community Energy Partnership factor on your bill and is included in the charge per hundred cubic feet (CCF) of gas shown in the itemized portion on your bill.

In addition to the 12 months of usage history that appears on your bill, you may also contact the Company to obtain up to 24 months of payment history.

### **READING YOUR METER**

We prepare your bill after reading your gas meter each month to determine the amount of natural gas that you have used. A locked entrance, a menacing dog, severe weather, shrubs or other material around the gas meter may prevent us from doing the actual monthly reading. When this happens it may be necessary for us to estimate your usage. Please take care to keep the area around your meter clear of debris.

If you believe your meter is malfunctioning or your reading is incorrect, you can request up to two additional re-reads of your meter per year, at no charge, or you can request a meter test. If your meter is found to be malfunctioning, Ohio Gas Company will remove the meter, conduct testing on the meter that you may witness upon request, and provide a new meter at no charge to you.

The Company performs an actual meter reading at the initiation and/or termination of service.

### **EMPLOYEE IDENTIFICATION**

All of our employees carry identification. If someone claims to be from the Ohio Gas Company, ask to see the proper identification, and call into our office if you are unsure before letting that person into your home. Any employee or agent for Ohio Gas Company seeking access to the dwelling or structure shall identify himself or herself and state the reason for being at the premise. The employee or agent shall, in all cases, direct himself or herself to a person who is responsible for the dwelling or structure.

### **TERMINATION OF GAS SERVICE**

Service can be terminated to a customer who:

- Has an unpaid past due gas bill.
- Failed to pay required security deposit.
- Tampered with the Ohio Gas Company meter.
- Failed to keep payment arrangements.
- Refused an Ohio Gas Company employee access to our meter or other equipment located at the service location.
- Misrepresented identity when applying for gas service.
- Endangered anyone's personal safety or the operation of our service through misuse of gas service and equipment.

Service can also be terminated if an unsafe condition exists.

### **PRIVACY RIGHTS**

Ohio Gas Company will not disclose a customer's account number, social security number, address, or phone number without the customer's affirmative consent except for purposes of commercial collection and working with local Community Action Agencies. In addition, a customer's social security number shall not be used for any other purposes except performing a credit check and to verify the customer's name matches to the social security number on file.

### **REGISTERING A COMPLAINT**

At some time you may disagree with us about your bill or a service we provided. If this happens, we ask that you immediately give us a call. Our Customer Service Representatives will be glad to work with you to resolve the problem.

If your complaint concerns a billing amount and you have received a 10-Day Disconnect Notice, you must contact us regarding your complaint before the **disconnect date** shown on the 10-Day Disconnect Notice.

Our Address: Ohio Gas Company  
P.O. Box 528  
Bryan, Ohio 43506-0528

Web Address: <http://www.ohiogas.com>

Phone Number: 1-800-331-7396 or 419-636-1117 – Monday thru Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

### Questions or Complaints

Customers with billing or service issues or concerns regarding a disconnect notice should contact Ohio Gas prior to contacting the public utilities commission of Ohio (PUCO). If your complaint is not resolved after you have called Ohio Gas, or for general utility information, residential and business customers may contact the 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>.