

AVISTA CORPORATION
 dba Avista Utilities

RULE NO. 9

RENDERING AND PAYMENT OF BILLS

A. Rendering of Bills

1. Billing Period

Bills for gas service will be rendered monthly or as otherwise provided in this rule.

2. Meter Readings

a. Normally, meters will be read monthly for the preparation of regular bills, and as required for the preparation of opening bills, closing bills, and special bills. Each meter on a customer's premises will be considered separately and the readings of two or more meters will not be combined except where the Company's operating convenience or necessity may require the use of more than one meter.

b. All bills will show the readings of the meters at the beginning and end of the period for which the bill is rendered, the date of the meter readings, the number of units of service supplied, the schedule number under which the bill was computed, and any other information necessary to the computation of the bill. Each bill bears on its face the delinquent date of the bill. When there is good reason for so doing, estimated bills may be submitted. Any estimated reading shall be clearly noted on the bill.

c. In cases where access to a meter is difficult because of the meter location or other circumstance, the Company will seek the customer's cooperation in obtaining monthly readings (for example, having the customer complete and return a meter reading form). Any customer reading is subject to actual verification by the Company not less than once every four months.

d. A customer must provide the Company with regular access to a meter on the customer's property. Failure to permit access at reasonable times and after reasonable notice is grounds for disconnection.

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- e. If a monthly manual meter reading is obtained, the Company will, upon written customer request, leave on the meter or with the customer, at the time of such reading, information showing the date and time of the meter reading, and the reading on the meter.
- f. The Company will make reasonable effort to prepare opening and closing bills from actual meter readings.
- g. It may not be possible always to read meters on the same day of each month, and should a monthly billing period contain less than 27 days or more than 35 days, a pro rata correction in the bill will be made in accordance with A.3. below. (C)

3. Pro Rata Correction

Except as otherwise provided in specific rate schedules, all bills rendered for periods of less than 27 days or more than 35 days will be computed in accordance with the applicable rate schedule, but the size of the commodity blocks, or fixed charge blocks, and the amount of the fixed charge, or minimum charge specified therein, will be prorated on the basis of the ratio of the number of days in the period to the number of days in an average month. The average monthly billing period is 30 days. (C)

4. Estimated Bills

If, because of unusual conditions or for reasons beyond its control, the Company is unable to read the customer's meter on the scheduled reading date, the Company may bill the customer for estimated consumption during the billing period, and make any necessary corrections when a reading is obtained.

Adjustments for any underestimate or overestimate of a customer's consumption will be reflected on the first regularly scheduled bill rendered and based on an actual reading immediately following the period of inaccessibility. Access to the meter, sufficient to permit its being read, shall be provided by the customer as a prerequisite to the Company making any adjustment in volumes of gas billed on an estimated basis.

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B. Payment of Bills

1. Periodic Bills: Bills are due and payable upon presentation and become past due if not paid within 15 days thereafter. To receive credit, payment must be made to any Company office or to an authorized representative or agent, either in person or by mail.
2. Payment Methods Accepted: Customers may be eligible to pay their bill by checking or savings account (electronically or mailed check), bankcard (credit, debit, or prepaid card), cash, or money order. At such time Avista offers a transaction fee free bankcard payment option to any of its residential customers on Rate Schedule 410, all residential customers on Schedule 410 will be able to pay by any payment method listed above without a transaction fee. Similar programs for transaction fee free payment options are not available to non-residential customers.
3. Returned Check Charge: The Company will require payment of a \$25.00 returned check charge for any check returned from the bank unpaid.
4. Closing Bills: Where gas service is terminated, closing bills will be due and payable upon presentation and become past due if not paid within 15 days thereafter. To receive credit, payment must be made to any Company office or to an authorized representative or agent, either in person or by mail.
5. In the event that a check, or draft, for payment of a bill, is not honored by the Customer's respective financial institution, the bill will be deemed unpaid. In such event, if valid payment is not received within one business day, the account may be subject to discontinuance under Rule 11. The Company may require payment by cash, certified check, or money order, if more than two payments are not honored within any consecutive twelve (12) month period.

C. Adjustment for Over-Billing and Under-Billing

Except as provided in Rule No. 18, whenever a bill presented to a customer for service is determined to be incorrect, the Company, without delay, will make appropriate adjustment as follows:

1. When an under or overbilling occurs, the Company will provide written notice to the customer detailing the circumstances, period of time, and amount of adjustment. If it can be shown that the error was due to some cause, the date of which can be fixed, the over or undercharge shall be computed back to such date. If no date can be fixed, the Company will refund the overcharge or rebill the undercharge for no more than six months' usage. In no event shall an over or underbilling be for more than three years' usage.
2. Where a customer is required to repay an underbilling, the customer is entitled to enter into a time payment agreement without regard to whether the customer already participates in such an agreement. If the customer and the Company cannot agree

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Patrick Ehrbar,

Director of Regulatory Affairs

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upon payment terms, the Commission shall establish terms and conditions to govern the repayment obligation. The Company will provide written notice advising the customer of the opportunity to enter into a time payment agreement and of the Commission's dispute resolution procedure.

D. Comfort Level Billing Plan for Residential Gas Service

The Company makes Comfort-Level Billing (CLB) available to residential customers. A customer with no outstanding balance may enter into a CLB plan at any time during the year as long as they agree to remain on the CLB for 12 months. The plan provides for an annual adjustment between the estimated charge and the actual charges. If a customer changes residences during the term of the agreement, the payments may be adjusted to reflect the anticipated change in usage. The plan is detailed as follows:

1. Meters will be read and billed at regular monthly intervals.
2. Customers will pay the CLB amount shown due each month.
3. The CLB amount will be one-twelfth of the estimated annual bill, based on the customer's most recent twelve months usage, or, if not available, the usage patterns of comparable customers similarly situated, and will be adjusted at the start of each succeeding year if current usage so indicates.
4. Accounts will be balanced by a bill showing a debit or credit amount, which is the net of actual twelve months' bills, less CLB payments made.
5. At the twelfth month anniversary an annual review will be made. The Customers base plan amount will be recalculated based on the most recent twelve months consumption. If the recalculated amount differs by 10% or more from the previous base plan amount the new monthly payments will be the recalculated amount. Debit balance may be paid off or included in their CLB payments. If included, the monthly payments will be the base plan amount plus 1/12th of the debit balance. Customers with a credit balance may have the credit balance refunded or keep it on their account.

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6. CLB amounts will be reviewed periodically or at times of a rate change and will be adjusted if required to reduce the likelihood of a large payment due or credit in the settlement month.
7. Participants will be removed from the plan if a bill containing a prior unpaid CLB amount becomes delinquent as defined in Rule No. 11.
8. Re-entry into the plan will be subject to approval of the Company and will be contingent upon all past due amounts being paid.
9. Customers may voluntarily withdraw from the plan upon notice to the Company. Any amounts due for usage over and above plan amounts already paid will be due and payable on the customer's next regular billing in accordance with the Company's filed tariff schedules. Any credit of plan amounts paid in excess of actual usage will be applied to the customer's next regular monthly bill or will be refunded by check if so requested by the customer.

E. Comfort Level Billing (CLB) Plans for Non-Residential Gas Service

The Company makes CLB available to small commercial customers that have space heating as their major load. The plan details of the non-residential CLB are identical to the plan details for the residential CLB.

F. Transfer Billings

1. If the Company identifies a balance a customer owes the Company from the customer's prior account for Oregon service, the Company will transfer the amount to the customer's current account after giving the customer notice of the transfer, the amount due under the prior account, the period of time during which the balance was incurred and the service address where the bill was incurred. If the bill is identified at the time a customer changes residences, the provisions of this rule apply.

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- 2. If the customer has six months or more remaining on a time-payment agreement, the installment amount will be adjusted in order to bring the account into balance within the time period specified in the original agreement. If the customer has less than six months remaining on a time-payment agreement, the Company will recalculate the agreement to bring that account into balance within 12 months. The customer must pay any past due time-payment installments before the Company adjusts or recalculates the agreement. The Company may make more liberal payment arrangements for customers on medical certificates who cannot reasonably be expected to pay the outstanding balance in the time otherwise applicable under this rule.

G. Late Payment Charge

- 1. Identified low-income customers will not be subject to late payment charges.
- 2. Payments not received by the next month's bill date will be considered late.
- 3. The late payment charge will not be applied to time-payment or equal-payment accounts that are current.
- 4. For balances less than \$50, no late payment charge will be assessed.
- 5. For balances between \$50 and \$200, a \$3 minimum late payment charge may be assessed.
- 5. For balances over \$200, if charged, the late payment charge will be based on a monthly late-payment rate applied to overdue account balances at the time of preparing the subsequent month's bill. The Commission determines the late-payment rate annually based on a survey of prevailing market rates for late-payment charges of commercial enterprises and advises all utilities by November 15, of each year what rate to use to determine late-payment charges on overdue customer accounts during the following calendar year. The current late-payment rate and the conditions for its application to customer accounts are specified on the utility bill.
- 6. Payment received on the day of the next month's bill date may result in a Late Payment Charge on the next bill; however, this charge will be adjusted on the following bill.

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