

# Arkansas **Customer Guide**



## Consumer's Gas Piping and Equipment

*Pursuant to U.S. Department of Transportation Regulation  
49 CFR 192.16*

Black Hills Energy does not maintain the customer's buried gas piping. If the customer's gas piping is not maintained, it may be subject to the potential of hazards and leaks. All buried gas piping should be periodically inspected for leaks and metallic piping should also be checked for corrosion. When excavating near buried gas piping, the piping should be located in advance and the excavation done by hand. Plumbing/heating contractors can assist you in locating, inspecting and repairing your buried gas piping.

## Material Safety Data

A Material Safety Data Sheet is available to provide more information on the physical properties and safe consumption and use of natural gas. This information is available upon request from any Black Hills Energy office.

## Call Before You Dig!

Before you dig a hole, call 811. Someone will come out to your construction site and clearly mark the path of our underground pipes. All we need is 48 hours' notice, and the service is free. So, for your own safety, don't dig. Just call 811 or toll free **800-482-8998** (the Arkansas One Call locating service number) before you dig.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

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## WELCOME

We appreciate the privilege of serving your energy needs! All of us at Black Hills Energy are dedicated to supplying you with natural gas — this nation's premier fuel — as dependably, safely and economically as possible. This booklet answers many questions customers have concerning our rules and regulations, and it provides information on the many services we offer.

If you have any questions, please call us toll-free at **800-563-0012** from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. You may also visit us online at **[www.blackhillsenergy.com](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com)**. Thank you again for the opportunity to be of service.

## Pipeline Safety

Natural gas pipelines may be located anywhere. To meet energy needs pipelines may cross pastures, subdivisions, parks, golf courses, streets and highways. In many cases pipelines that were constructed in open fields many years ago are now located in the middle of developed areas. One of the greatest challenges to pipeline safety is damage caused by excavation related to construction, farming and even homeowner construction and maintenance. Warning signs are installed to educate the public about the general location of some of our natural gas pipelines and provide Black Hills Energy's contact information to the public, but these signs may not always be present due to vandalism, theft or damage. So before beginning any excavation project, be sure to call 811.

For additional information regarding pipeline safety and Black Hills Energy's pipeline integrity program please visit **[www.blackhillsenergy.com](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com)**.

## If You Smell Gas

### If there is a gas odor in your home:

- Leave your home immediately and call Black Hills Energy at **800-563-0012** from a neighbor's house.
- Do not use a telephone, switch a light on or off, or light a match when leaving your home.
- Wait at the neighbor's house until our service technician arrives to make a safety inspection of your home.

**Safety Is Our First Concern at Black Hills Energy.** REMEMBER: IF YOU HAVE A LEAK, OR AN EMERGENCY PERTAINING TO NATURAL GAS, CALL FOR SERVICE IMMEDIATELY.

For All Emergencies We're At Your Service 24 Hours a Day  
Call Black Hills Energy at **800-563-0012**.

This guide summarizes, in layman's terms, the rights and responsibilities of Black Hills Energy regarding its customers. This guide can be mailed to any customer upon request.

**Q. What types of service does Black Hills Energy offer?**

**A.** Black Hills Energy provides natural gas service to residential, commercial and industrial customers.

**Q. How do I apply for gas service?**

**A.** It's easy. Just call us at **800-563-0012** and tell one of our customer care representatives that you want gas service. They'll get all the necessary information, and they can tell you if gas service is already available to your residence.

**Q. What is meant by the "residential" class of service?**

**A.** It basically means providing natural gas to people who live in houses, mobile homes, duplexes and apartment houses for their personal use. And by "people", we mean individuals or single families who have their accounts in their own names. For example, we provide service to any family dwelling that's individually metered. The distinction gets a little more difficult when someone operates a business out of his or her home, but so long as more than half of the gas service is being used for personal, and not business needs, it's classified as residential.

**Q. How about non-residential classes of service?**

**A.** We divide our non-residential customers into several categories based on the amount of natural gas they consume annually. If your account is being billed as a non-residential account and you would like more information concerning our rates, just call or visit our website at **[www.blackhillsenergy.com/rates](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com/rates)**.

**Q. Who approves the rates used in calculating my bill?**

**A.** All rate schedules are approved by the Arkansas Public Service Commission.

**Q. Do you require a deposit to begin serving my residence or business with gas?**

**A.** Yes, under certain conditions we do. If a deposit is required, for a residential customer, the amount will be no more than two average monthly gas bills. For example, assume the average residential gas bill is \$60 per month. Your deposit would be \$120 ( $\$60 + \$60 = \$120$ ).

**Q. When would you not require a deposit from a Residential customer?**

**A.** In the following situations, a deposit is not required:

1. If you are a new customer.
2. If you have received or are receiving gas service from us somewhere else and have a good credit history. If you move to another location within our service territory and had already paid a deposit to us for your previous account, we can transfer your existing deposit.

**Q. If I'm required to pay a deposit, do I have to pay all of the deposit before you'll start gas service**

A. No. You can pay your deposit in a couple of different ways. Just choose the one that's easier for you. You can:

1. Pay the full amount by credit or debit card, or by check, when you apply for service; or,
2. Pay one-half of the deposit (1/2) by credit or debit card, or by check, when you apply for service, with the balance billed on your first month's gas bill.

**Q. Does my deposit earn interest?**

A. Yes. We'll pay you interest on your money at a rate determined annually by the Arkansas Public Service Commission. Interest will be paid to you annually as a credit to your gas bill. Your deposit will not earn interest once refunded.

**Q. Do I ever get the deposit back?**

A. You sure do. If you're a Residential customer your deposit, plus interest, will be automatically credited to your account after 12 months IF:

- Your account is paid up; and,
- Your payments have not been delinquent more than two times during the previous 12 month period.

Of course, if you're leaving our system, we'll apply your deposit, plus interest, to your outstanding balance and either mail you a final bill or a refund of any amount of the deposit that's left over after your outstanding balance is satisfied.

**Q. If I'm a Commercial or Industrial customer, do I get my deposit back?**

A. Yes, but only upon termination of service, or as otherwise required by the Arkansas Public Service Commission.

**Q. After I start getting gas service, do you ever require an additional deposit?**

A. Sometimes, but only if:

- We have to suspend your service because you haven't paid your gas bills; or, You're late in paying your bill by the close of business on the due date three times in the past 12 months, or two times in a row; or,
- Two or more of your checks used to pay your gas bill "bounced" because of insufficient funds in the last 12 months; or,
- Your actual usage during the first 12 months exceeds the estimated usage upon which the deposit was first calculated; or,
- During the last 24 months, you have misrepresented your identity or other facts relevant to the conditions under which you obtained or continued service;
- You obtained, diverted or used service without authorization or have tampered with utility equipment during the last two years; or
- You file for bankruptcy and a new deposit is required for your new post-bankruptcy account.

**Q. Would I have to pay the entire additional deposit at once?**

A. In most cases, an existing customer who is required to post an additional deposit may pay the deposit in two installments with the next two bill payments.

**Q. Is there a charge for turning on the gas to my residence or business?**

A. In most cases, no, there is no "connection charge." After you apply and are

approved for service, we schedule a time the following day between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except for holidays, to come out and turn on your gas. These are our normal working hours, and we make every effort to start your service as soon as possible after your application has been approved. If waiting for your gas to be connected would threaten your health or create a hardship for you, you may request that we connect your service as soon as we can – including during non-business hours. For non-business hours connection, there is a non-refundable connection charge. The amount of that connection charge can be found at [www.blackhillsenergy.com/rates](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com/rates).

**Q. What's a "reconnection charge"?**

- A. If you terminate your service and then ask for it to be started again at the same location within 12 months, you must pay a reconnection charge. This reconnection charge is calculated by multiplying the Customer Charge for your rate class by the months your service has been disconnected.

On the other hand, if your service is suspended for nonpayment, you will be required to pay a set "reconnection charge", laid out in our tariff, in order to continue receiving gas service at your residence or business. This charge, as well as other charges can be found in our Rates section at [www.blackhillsenergy.com/rates](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com/rates). All rates and charges are approved by the Arkansas Public Service Commission.

## BILLING

**Q. How often will I be billed for gas service?**

- A. Monthly.

**Q. How long is my billing period?**

- A. Your billing period will normally be not less than 25 days, but no more than 35 days, unless it is your first or final bill.

**Q. How much time do I have to pay my bill?**

- A. The due date of bills in a particular cycle is based on when the bills are mailed. You have 22 days from the date your bill is mailed to make your payment. The due date of your bill is shown at the top of the bill and on the payment stub at the bottom of the bill. Your payment must be received by the due date to avoid a late payment charge.

**Q. Is my gas payment due on the same day each month?**

- A. Probably not. Our meter readers can't read all our customer's meters at the same time each month, so we send out bills in several cycles during the month. Each cycle has a different due date. Since the due date can't be on a holiday or weekend, we extend the date to the next working day. As a result, your due date can change from month to month.

**Q. How do I get my bill?**

- A. We'll mail your bill to you at your service location, though you can request that we send your bill to an address other than the service location. You also have the option of receiving paperless electronic bills you can read online. To enroll in paperless billing, visit [www.blackhillsenergy.com](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com).

**Q. Am I liable for my bill if I don't receive it for some reason?**

A. Yes, you are. Call us at **800-563-0012** as soon as you think your bill has been lost. The failure to receive a bill doesn't extend the time for payment or prevent us from sending you a Shut-Off Notice if the account is overdue.

**Q. Can I get a copy of my bill?**

A. Sure, just visit **www.blackhillsenergy.com** and log into your account or call **800-563-0012**.

**Q. What kind of information appears on my gas bill?**

A. You'll find the following information:

- Your name and service address
- Your account number
- Previous bill total
- Date the bill was mailed
- The rate schedule used to compute the bill
- If a late payment charge was applied to the amount billed last month
- The service period
- Date the bill is due
- Net amount of all payments and other credits applied to the account during the billing period
- Number of service days in the billing period
- The balance forward, if the account was not paid in full last month
- The amount due, including the late payment charge if the bill is paid after the due date.
- Current month charges
- Total this bill
- The previous reading, the current reading, the reading type and usage in CCFs (Hundred Cubic Feet)
- All itemized charges and credits, such as:
  - a. Customer charge**
  - b. Delivery charge**
  - c. Primary gas charge**
  - d. Secondary gas charge**
  - e. Energy Efficiency Cost Recovery**
  - f. Main Replacement Program**
  - g. Meter Relocation**
  - h. Weather Normalization Adjustment**
  - i. Deposit installments**
  - j. Deposit refunds**
  - k. Taxes or fees listed by kind**
- Telephone number and address where the customer can contact the company to inquire about the bill, service and payment arrangements.

**Q. What is the "Customer Charge" on my bill?**

A. The Customer Charge is a fixed monthly charge that each customer incurs for having an account with Black Hills Energy. It does not depend on the amount of gas you use.

**Q. What is the “Delivery Charge”?**

A. The Delivery Charge shown on your bill is what you pay to have us deliver natural gas to your home or business. It is calculated on a per Ccf basis, so it will go up or down depending on the amount of gas you use each month.

**Q. What is the “Primary Gas Charge” and “Secondary Gas Charge”?**

A. These charges reflect the cost of gas that we buy to serve you. The Primary Gas Charge reflects for the current year is based on projected natural gas costs. It is adjusted twice a year to reflect the winter cost of gas (effective April through October) and the summer cost of gas (effective April through October). The Secondary Gas Charge changes once a year (effective for months of November through October) and is a true-up of gas costs for the previous year. It can be either a surcharge or a refund depending on whether we over or under collected on gas costs for the previous year.

**Q. What’s the “Franchise Fee”?**

A. This fee is imposed upon Black Hills Energy by a municipality as compensation for the use of its streets for installing pipe and other utility facilities. As permitted by its tariff, Black Hills Energy passes this fee on to customers within the municipality imposing the fee.

**Q. What’s the Energy Efficiency Charge?**

A. Through its Energy Efficiency Cost Recovery Rider, Black Hills Energy Arkansas recovers the costs of its energy efficiency programs approved by the Arkansas Public Service Commission.

**Q. What’s the Main Replacement Program (MRP) Rider?**

A. Through its Energy Efficiency Cost Recovery Rider, Black Hills Energy Arkansas recovers the costs of its energy efficiency programs approved by the Arkansas Public Service Commission.

**Q. What’s the Main Replacement Charge?**

A. Through its Main Replacement Program Rider, Black Hills Energy Arkansas recovers the costs of replacing bare steel gas mains, coated steel gas mains that are not cathodically protected, and gas mains that are the subject of an advisory issued by a federal or state agency and which Black Hills Energy Arkansas has determined to be in unsatisfactory condition.

**Q. What’s the Meter Relocation Charge?**

A. Through its At-Risk Meter Relocation Program Rider, Black Hills Energy Arkansas recovers the costs of relocating meters which, due to their location, are susceptible to being struck by a motor vehicle.

**Q. What’s the Weather Normalization Adjustment?**

A. The Company’s rates are based upon normal temperatures calculated on a 30 year average of the daily high and low temperatures. The Weather Normalization Adjustment is designed to reduce fluctuations in billings when the actual temperatures are above or below this 30 year average. If the weather is colder than the 30 year average, the adjustment will be a credit on your bill. If the weather is warmer than the 30 year average, the adjustment will be a debit or a charge on your bill. The Weather Normalization Adjustment

is in effect during the months of November through April and is included for those customers taking service under rate schedules Residential, Business 1 and Business 2.

**Q. How can I pay my bill?**

A. Your bill may be paid in a number of ways:

- You may pay your bill by using your Visa, MasterCard, or Discover credit cards, or your checking or savings accounts at either **www.blackhillsenergy.com/payment-options** or by phone at **800-563-0012** (Convenience Fees may apply)
- Visit **www.blackhillsenergy.com/payment-options** to pay from your checking or savings account any time using the “make A Payment” bank transfer option
- Enroll in the recurring payment program to automatically pay your monthly bill from the savings or checking account you specify
- You may make your payment at authorized walk-in pay stations that accept payments for Black Hills Energy. Visit **www.blackhillsenergy.com/payment-options** to find a location near you. Please note that pay stations may charge a convenience fee
- You may mail your payment to the address listed on the bill. (Because we credit your account on the date we receive your payment, please allow adequate time for postal delivery).

**Q. What type of payments are accepted at authorized pay stations?**

A. Any authorized pay station will accept the following types of payments:

- Payments for gas bills paid in full on or before the due date of the bill.
- Payments for shut-off notices paid in full on or before the due date of the shut-off notice.

**Q. Can I pay my bill after normal business hours?**

A. Yes, after normal business hours, you can pay your bill online by credit or debit card, or by check, at **www.blackhillsenergy.com** (Convenience Fee may apply).

**Q. Is there a charge if my payment is returned from the bank?**

A. Yes. Because of the extra time and processing involved in returning your check, you'll be charged an additional amount for checks returned to us marked NSF (Non-Sufficient Funds). The amount of the NSF charge can be found on our rate sheet at **www.blackhills.com/rates**.

**Q. Do you ever estimate a bill instead of actually reading the meter?**

A. Yes. Suppose there's been a heavy snowfall and we cannot read your meter, your meter gets damaged, or we are unable to gain access to read your meter. In those instances and certain others, we will estimate your usage. Your bill would be estimated by calculating a ratio of your average daily usage for the previous month compared to the average daily usage of a group of similar customers. The ratio would then be multiplied by the current month's average daily usage for the similar group to determine the estimated daily usage for your bill. The estimated daily usage is then multiplied by the number of days in the current billing period to determine your estimated usage to be billed.

**Q. Can I look on my bill and tell if my meter was actually read or if my bill was estimated?**

A. Yes, you can. Any time we estimate usage, we clearly state that fact on the face of the bill.

**Q. How can I verify the accuracy of my gas bill?**

A. Our meters are read and your billing is based on the amount of gas you have used during the billing period. There are several options available to confirm the accuracy of our billings:

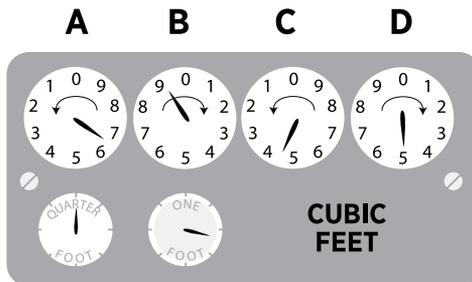
- You can contact our Customer Care Center at **800-563-0012** to have someone verify your meter reading
- If you still feel that the meter reading is incorrect after a company representative verifies it, you may request that your meter be tested. There may be a charge for this test. Contact the customer care center for further information at **800-563-0012**.

**Q. Can I read my meter myself to double-check the meter reader?**

A. Sure. The dials on your gas meter register the amount of gas used in units of 100 cubic feet. Reading your meter is similar to reading a clock. Here's what to do:

1. Face the meter and read the dials from left to right. Only the top four numbers appear on your bill.
2. Read the numbers as indicated by the hands on the dials. If a hand is between two numbers, read the smaller number, except when the hand is between 0 and 9 as in "B," in which case you read the number 9. In the illustration below, dial A reads 6, dial B reads 9, dial C reads 4 and dial D reads 5. The correct reading for this meter is 6945.

Take a look at your bill and see when the meter was read last month, then read it yourself on the same day this month. Wait until you receive your bill and then compare your readings with ours. If the date you read the meter is the same as ours, both readings should be roughly the same. If the readings are not close, please call and we'll review the meter readings available for your account or schedule an order to re-read your meter if needed.



**Q. What can I do if I think my meter's not working properly?**

A. Call us as soon as you notice the problem. We'll visually inspect the meter.

Then, if we think it might be defective, or if you request that we check it more thoroughly, we'll take it back to our shop and bench test it. If we find that the meter is reading accurately, the Arkansas Public Service Commission permits us to charge you a nominal fee for the meter test. If we discover that your meter is defective, there will be no fee for the test, and we'll make an adjustment on your bill or make a refund to you within a reasonable time.

## SPECIAL BILLING PLANS

**Q. If I own more than one house or structure at different locations, will I get more than one bill?**

A. Yes, unless you request a different arrangement, you'll get a bill for each service location.

**Q. I'm retired and on a fixed income. Do you offer a special payment plan that can help me budget my expenses more easily?**

A. Yes, it's appropriately called the Balanced Billing Plan. It allows you to pay a more uniform amount each month throughout the year. With our Balanced Billing Plan, you pay approximately the same amount for gas each month. This allows you to maintain control over your budget and avoid paying large winter bills. To find out more information or to see if you qualify for our Balanced Billing Plan call us today or visit our website at [www.blackhillsenergy.com](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com) and read the tariff for Balanced Billing.

**Q. I really don't enjoy sitting down and writing checks for all my bills. Is there an easier way to pay my gas bill?**

A. Yes. The easiest way is with our Automatic Bank Transfer (ABT) plan. It's just what it says: you authorize us to withdraw money from one of your bank accounts to pay your gas bill. We send you a copy of your bill before the bank draft is written, so you know how much to deduct from your account. The ABT plan works very well with the Balanced Billing Plan. When you combine the two, you know in advance approximately how much you'll have to pay and when the money will be withdrawn each month, but you don't have to lift a finger — your bill's paid for you! For more information about our handy ABT plan, call the customer care center at **800-563-0012** today, or visit us online at [www.blackhillsenergy.com](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com).

**Q. I am on a fixed income and my check arrives after the due date of the bill. Can I change my due date?**

A. Yes, under certain circumstances we allow qualifying residential customers to extend their due date to allow payment to coincide more closely with the receipt of their income. To see if you qualify for our Extended Due Date Plan, contact the Customer Care Center at **800-563-0012** or visit our website at [www.blackhillsenergy.com](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com) and find out more about the Extended Due Date Plan within our Tariff.

**Q. If I do not qualify for the Extended Due Date Plan, but I do not receive my check until after the due date of my bill, will I have to pay the late payment charge every month?**

A. Possibly not. If you are 65 years and older or an individual with disabilities,

we offer a special plan called the Penalty Waiver Plan. Under this plan, if you are having trouble paying your bill by the due date, we'll eliminate the Late Payment Charge. If you or someone you know might benefit from our Penalty Waiver Plan, please call us today or read our Penalty Waiver Plan tariff which is located on our website [www.blackhillsenergy.com](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com).

**Q. Can my business or organization be exempt from Sales Tax?**

- A. Any business or organization that files for a Sales Tax Exemption certificate from the State of Arkansas may qualify for this exemption. To determine if you qualify, contact the Secretary of State. If you qualify, forward the Sales Tax Exemption certificate to us at Black Hills Energy, 655 East Millsap Road, Suite 104, Fayetteville, AR 72703-1002 and we'll exempt your account from state sales tax.

**Q. I am having difficulty paying my bill. What can I do?**

- A. If you can't pay your gas bill in full, we have a plan that will allow you to make monthly payments on a current or past due amount through a Delayed Payment Agreement (DPA). To qualify for this plan you must:
1. contact us prior to the last day to pay as shown on the shut-off notice;
  2. agree to pay your future bills by the due date and pay 1/4 of the past due amount as a down payment and the balance in installments over a three month period;
  3. not currently have a DPA; and
  4. not have defaulted on a DPA within the last 12 months.

**Q. How does a Delayed Payment Agreement work?**

- A. If you can't pay your gas bill in full, we won't turn off the gas if you agree to:
1. Pay a reasonable portion of the past due bill; and,
  2. Pay the balance of the bill in reasonable installments; and,
  3. Pay in full all future bills during the period of the DPA by their due dates.
- In setting up the DPA, we will take into consideration your ability to pay, the size of the unpaid bill, your payment history and the length of time and reasons your account hasn't been paid. Our finance charge on the unpaid balance won't exceed the maximum amount allowed by the Arkansas Public Service Commission on the date the agreement is entered into.

We also allow a delayed payment arrangement for any amounts charged to correct an under billing of your account. If we bill you for an amount to correct a previous under billing, we'll allow you to pay back the under billed amount over a period of time that's equal to the period when the under billing occurred. If the under billing is our fault or it's impossible to determine whose fault it was, we won't impose a finance charge.

**Q. What can I do if I'm going to be away for an extended period of time but want my gas left on?**

- A. Just call us ahead of time and tell us when you'll be gone. We'll help you make arrangements to keep your account current. The easiest way is with our Automatic Bank Transfer Plan. This plan authorizes payment of your bills directly from your bank account without you doing anything. We will send you a copy of

your bill before the bank draft is drawn, so you will know how much should be deducted when you balance your checkbook. We also offer a Pre-payment Plan. This plan provides an opportunity for you to pre-pay an amount that will be held by us, and your monthly bills will be deducted from that amount. You may request that we mail your bill to a third party or to an alternate address while you are gone.

## SERVICE TERMINATION/SUSPENSION

### Q. How do I stop my gas service?

A. Just call the customer care center at **800-563-0012**, go online to **www.blackhillsenergy.com** and log into your account, or write us a letter. You must give us at least five days' notice before the date that you want your gas turned off. If you write, we'll consider the notice to be given three days after the letter is mailed. Naturally, until the gas service is actually terminated, you're responsible for paying for gas service to your location.

### Q. Can the gas company turn off my gas without telling me in advance?

A. Yes, under certain circumstances. These are:

- When we think that turning the gas off is necessary to correct a situation that poses a health or safety hazard to you or others;
- To prevent the unauthorized use of service or tampering with pipes, meters and other company equipment;
- If a customer fails to honor the terms of a Delayed Payment Agreement, Extension Agreement, or Arkansas Public Service Commission Order;
- When a customer threatens or causes injury to our employee or the employee's family to prevent or retaliate for an act the employee performs in the course of business; or,
- When a customer causes damage, or threatens to cause damage, to utility property.

### Q. If I don't pay my gas bill, what will happen?

A. Of course, we'll try to work with you if you're having a temporary problem. But, we will eventually shut off the gas service if a bill isn't paid.

## SHUT-OFF NOTICES

### Q. Will I receive a notice before my gas is disconnected for non-payment?

A. Yes, if your bill remains unpaid at the close of business on the due date, we'll send a "Shut-Off Notice." This notice is either mailed or hand delivered. If the Shut-Off Notice is hand delivered, we'll give you five days from the date of delivery to pay your past due bill before the gas is turned off. If the Shut-Off Notice is mailed, we'll allow you eight days from the mailing date to pay your bill before the gas is turned off.

### Q. Can I request that a third party receive a copy of any Shut-Off Notice that is sent to me?

A. Yes. Residential customers may name a consenting person or agency that they wish to receive a copy of any Shut-Off Notice that we send to you, and we will mail that person or agency the Shut-Off Notice as well.

**Q. What does a Shut-Off Notice say?**

A. A Shut-Off Notice contains the following information:

- Your name and address and the address of the service location
- Your account number
- The date the shut-off notice is issued
- The date the bill became delinquent
- The reason(s) for the suspension of service
- The amount past due
- The date after which service will be suspended unless you take appropriate action
- The amount of the collection fee we will charge you if we send a representative to your service address and collect the delinquent bill
- If service is suspended, what you must do, and the amount you must pay to have your service reconnected
- A statement of what you can do to avoid suspension
- A statement that if you are a residential customer who has a serious medical condition, or is 65 or older, or is handicapped, you may contact us about qualifying for delaying suspension of service
- A statement that you may contact us for the names of federal, state and local bill payment assistance agencies
- The telephone number you can call in order to pay the bill, make payment arrangements, or make a complaint
- If suspension is for non-payment, a statement that you may qualify to pay the bill in installments and avoid shut-off if you contact the customer care center on or before the close of business on the due date of the Shut-Off Notice and request a Delayed Payment Agreement, and
- The address and phone number where you may contact the Arkansas Public Service Commission concerning an unresolved complaint.

**Q. After a Shut-Off Notice is sent, when will you actually turn off the gas?**

A. We will shut off gas service on the date indicated on the Shut-Off Notice or within a reasonable time thereafter – between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. We won't shut off gas on a day when the Company is closed or on the day before such a date. We also won't shut off the gas to Residential customers on a day when the National Weather Service forecast, that morning, predicts a minimum temperature for the next twenty-four (24) hours of 32°F or lower.

**Q. Under what circumstances does the Company suspend service?**

A. For a variety of reasons, which are as follows:

1. Failure to pay an undisputed delinquent account;
2. A former customer who owes us an outstanding bill for service at the premises remains at the premises; a full-time occupant of the premises when the bill was incurred remains at the premises; or, a full-time user of the service when the bill was incurred remains at the premises;
3. A current customer and a former customer who lived together at another location now live together at a new service location and the former

customer owes a bill for service used during the time they lived together at a former location.

4. The customer is not in compliance with an Arkansas Public Service Commission order, Delayed Payment Agreement, or Extension Agreement with the utility;
5. The customer has not paid a deposit required by us for utility service;
6. Unauthorized use of service or tampering with utility equipment;
7. A misrepresentation of fact relevant to the conditions under which the applicant or customer obtained or continued utility service;
8. The customer has not paid a billed Arkansas Public Service Commission-approved charge associated with providing service;
9. Refusal to grant a utility access to its equipment at the customer's location at a reasonable time;
10. Violating the utility's rule designed to prevent interference with the use of service by other customers, if the customer was notified first and given a reasonable opportunity to comply with the rules;
11. Violating the utility's rules regarding the operation of non-standard equipment or unauthorized attachments, if the customer was notified first and given a reasonable opportunity to comply with the rules;
12. Violating federal, state, or local laws or regulations through use of the service;
13. Abandoning the premises served;
14. Causing or threatening injury to a utility employee or an employee's family to prevent or to retaliate for an act the utility performs in the course of business;
15. Causing damage to utility property;
16. Threatening to cause damage to utility property;
17. Not paying for damage to utility equipment on the customer's premises; or,
18. A condition exists which poses a health or safety hazard.

Despite the Shut-Off Notice, gas service won't be suspended if the customer pays the delinquent amount plus a collection fee when our representative arrives to cut off service. If the payment is made by personal check, our employees can refuse the check if you have given us two checks within the previous 12 months that have been returned unpaid for any reason other than bank error.

**Q. Will the Company reconnect service after it's been suspended?**

- A. Yes, once the reason for suspension has been resolved, we'll be happy to reconnect service to you. We'll schedule the reconnection for a time during our normal business hours, and you will be charged our published reconnect fee, unless the suspension was our fault. In that case, we'll reconnect service free of charge and as soon as possible. If the reason for the suspension was for unlawful or fraudulent use of our service, we will require a reasonable payment for estimated service received plus a deposit before we reconnect service. We

may also refuse to reconnect service if the service has not been paid for, unless we are ordered to do so by the Arkansas Public Service Commission.

## DELAYING SUSPENSION OF SERVICE

### **Q. What special situations would delay an individual's gas from being turned off?**

- A. There are three situations that delay a delinquent account from being shut-off — even if the gas bill remains unpaid. They are:
1. The existence of a Delayed Payment Agreement for the account, provided the account holder contacts our customer care center before the date printed on the Shut-Off Notice
  2. The holder of the delinquent account suffers from a Certified Serious Medical Condition
  3. Landlord/tenant situations.

### **Q. Who qualifies to enter into a Delayed Payment Agreement?**

- A. Any Residential customer, and any Commercial customer with an average bill for the most recent 12 months of \$200 or less, and that is unable to pay a bill in full. If you think you may qualify for this plan, contact us by telephone, or in person, on or before the due date shown on the Shut-Off Notice.

### **Q. What determines whether a Certified Serious Medical Condition exists?**

- A. In order for a customer to claim a Certified Serious Medical Condition, he/she must provide us with a certificate from a doctor stating that suspension of service would create a substantial risk of death or aggravate a serious illness for the customer, a member of his/her family, or other permanent residents of the premises where service is provided. Medical certificates are available through the customer care center. This certificate:
- Identifies the individual,
  - Identifies the nature of the medical emergency,
  - Specifies the likely effects on the health of the individual from suspending gas service, and
  - States the length of time during which shutting off the gas would endanger the individual. Notice by telephone call from a doctor or nurse, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, or public or private agency providing physical or mental healthcare services is acceptable if such notice is followed by written certification that is received within seven days. Delaying suspension or reconnecting service under this certificate does not excuse you from being required to pay for the service.
  - The medical certificate is only good for 30 days (that includes the seven day waiting period to get the certificate). A customer may renew the certificate as long as it is within the original 30 days.

### **Q. What was the landlord/tenant situation you mentioned?**

- A. When a landlord doesn't pay the gas bill for his/her rental properties, we will notify the tenants seven days after we send the landlord a Shut-Off Notice. Because several individuals may be involved, we will wait 30 days from the

date the landlord's bill was due before we shut off the gas at that location. When possible, we will offer each tenant the opportunity to apply for gas service in his/her own name. If this isn't practical, or if the tenant declines to apply for such service, we will turn off the gas.

**Q. Does the company allow for special provisions for Residential customers 65 or older or individuals with disabilities?**

A. Yes. Prior to suspending service to customers who have been identified as 65 years or older or have a disability, we attempt to provide special notice of the potential suspension to the customer, first by phone, and if we are unable to reach the customer by phone, then in writing. If we are able to contact the customer, or if the customer contacts us prior to a potential suspension, we will offer to:

- Arrange a Delayed Payment Agreement or Balanced Billing Plan;
- Explain the right to third party notice prior to suspension of service; and
- Provide the name of federal, state and local bill payment assistance agencies.

**Q. What is an Extension Agreement?**

A. An Extension Agreement is an arrangement through which we give you a short extension of time (less than 30 days) to pay your bill, if you are unable to pay it in full on the due date. You must contact our customer care center to arrange such an agreement before the date printed on your Shut-Off Notice to prevent suspension of service.

## REFUSAL OF SERVICE/FRAUDULENT USE

### Q. Does the Company ever refuse to serve someone?

- A. Yes, under some circumstances. Specifically, items numbered 1-8, 11, 12, and 14-16 under the reasons why we suspend service listed on page 16 of this guide. In addition, we will refuse service when:
- The applicant can't be served because our pipelines don't serve the applicant's premises, or connection to our system may unfavorably affect the service of our existing customers.
  - The applicant has not provided acceptable evidence of his/her identity.
  - The applicant is not in compliance with our tariffs, which have been approved by the Arkansas Public Service Commission.
  - The applicant has an unpaid delinquent gas bill.

### Q. What happens if someone steals gas from the Company?

- A. In addition to legal remedies available to us, we will require payment for the gas service that was stolen. The amount of the payment required will be based on the average consumption during the period before the person engaged in the unlawful or fraudulent use of our gas service or upon the consumption of another normal customer with a similar consumption pattern. In addition, we may require a deposit equal to the amount of six average billing periods.

## BILLING PROBLEMS

### Q. What should I do if I think my bill is wrong?

- A. Please call us at **800-563-0012**. Our trained customer care representatives can help you. Here are a few tips to remember if you call us about your bill:
1. Try to state your complaint or problem as clearly as possible.
  2. If you have a suggestion for settling the problem, tell our customer care representative.
  3. For your records, write down the first name of the person(s) you talk with and the date of your call.

### Q. What if I'm not satisfied after talking to the customer care representative?

- A. Ask to speak with his/her supervisor.

### Q. What if I think the bill or the proposed solution is still wrong?

- A. Naturally, we hope to be able to solve your problem ourselves, and we have skilled employees who regularly handle these matters. But if we can't answer your question to your satisfaction, we will advise you of your right to call or write the Arkansas Public Service Commission's Consumer Services Section to file a complaint.

The Commission's telephone number and address are: Arkansas Public Service Commission Attention: Consumer Services Section 1000 Center, P.O. Box 400 Little Rock, AR 72203-0400; Little Rock telephone number: **501-682-1718** Toll-free telephone number: **800-482-1164**

## RATE INFORMATION

Rates and charges associated with each Black Hills Energy Arkansas rate schedule are summarized on our website at **[www.blackhillsenergy.com/rates](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com/rates)**.

## CONCLUSION

We at Black Hills Energy hope this guide has been beneficial in answering your questions. **The Arkansas Public Service Commission requires utilities to provide this information.** If you have any additional questions or would like to review the Arkansas Public Service Commission General Service Rules, visit the Commission's website at **[www.arkansas.gov/psc](http://www.arkansas.gov/psc)** or visit one of our local offices listed on the back of this guide where the General Service Rules are on display. If you would like a copy of our tariffs, visit our website at **[www.blackhillsenergy.com](http://www.blackhillsenergy.com)**.

## OFFICE LOCATIONS & TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### **Fayetteville**

655 E. Millsap Road  
Suite 104  
800-563-0012  
Payment kiosk available

### **Ozark**

101 E. Commercial  
800-563-0012  
Payment kiosk available

### **Billing Remittance Address**

Black Hills Energy  
P.O. Box 6001  
Rapid City, SD 57709

### **Emergency**

After-Hours  
800-563-0012

### **Black Hills Energy Arkansas**

#### **General Office**

#### **Mailing Address:**

655 E. Millsap Road  
Suite 104  
Fayetteville, AR 72703-1002

#### **Street Address:**

655 E. Millsap Road,  
Suite 104  
Fayetteville, AR 72703  
Phone: 800-563-0012

#### **Arkansas Public Service Commission**

#### **Mailing Address:**

P.O. Box 400  
Little Rock, AR 72203-0400

#### **Street Address:**

1000 Center, Little Rock, AR  
Phone: 800-482-1164