



Public Service Commission of West Virginia

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PSC Offers Strategies for High Electric Bills

CHARLESTON, WV – With the dramatic drop in temperatures, the Public Service Commission wants to remind customers if they receive a higher than expected electric bill that they cannot pay they should first contact their utility company. It is important to remember that electric bills are based on usage and unusually high bills are frequently a function of cold weather usage. No rate increases have been implemented in the past year for the four largest electric companies operating in West Virginia: Appalachian Power Company, Wheeling Power Company, Monongahela Power or Potomac Edison.

If customers receive a bill they believe is inaccurate, they should first contact their electric utility directly. There are several steps that can determine if the bill is accurate:

First, check the reading on your meter and compare it to the ending reading on the recent bill. The reading on the meter should be higher than the reading on the current bill.

Second, if the bill appears to accurately reflect the usage, the customer can conduct a “breaker box test” by turning off everything in the breaker box. Once all breakers are in the off position the meter should completely stop moving, indicating zero usage. Then the customer turns the breakers on one at a time, observing after each breaker is on to determine if something is causing the meter to move really fast, possibly indicating a problem with an appliance. If the breaker box test does not reveal anything unusual the customer may request the company send a technician to check their meter.

Finally, if their bill is accurate, the customer can contact the utility and request a deferred payment plan to amortize the bill over a set number of months or to be enrolled in an average monthly or budget billing program.

Additionally, there are a number of resources available to help customers with utility bills, including the Low Income Energy Assistance Program, available through WV-DHHR (<https://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/1566>); the Dollar Energy Fund (<https://www.dollarenergy.org/>); contacting the network of agencies through 2-1-1 (<http://www.wv211.org/>); APCo/WPCo (<https://www.appalachianpower.com/>); and Mon Power/PE (<https://www.firstenergycorp.com/fehome.html>).

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