



Informal Complaint Processing

*Daniel Mumford
Manager, Field Review
Bureau of Consumer Services
November 1, 2011*

Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS)

Mission

- Promote efficient and effective Utility customer service
- Enforce statutes and regulations
- Assure access to essential utility service
- Promote quality customer service at BCS
 - timely, efficient, and effective action

2011

BCS

Bureau of Consumer Services
Director
Alexis Bechtel

**Administrative
Officer**

**Training /
Quality
Assurance**

Supervisor
Dan Romage

Systems Support
Analyst
Jimmy Farley

**Customer Assistance & Complaints
DIVISION (CACD)**

Lou Sauers - Division Chief

**CALL CENTERS
Administrator**

Harrisburg
Call Center

Philadelphia
Call Center

**Informal
Complaint Unit 1**

**Informal
Complaint Unit 2**

**Informal
Complaint Unit 3**

**Informal
Complaint Unit 4**

Policy - DIVISION

Lenora Best - Division Chief

**Energy/Policy Unit
Supervisor**

**Field Review , Compliance,
& Competition Unit**

**Telecom/Policy
Unit**

Using Complaints as Problem Indicators

- Consumer complaints to **utilities** (root cause analysis)
 - patterns and trends may be representative of system problems or regional issues
 - could complaints have been prevented?
- Complaints to **PUC**:
 - are they representative of a system problem?
 - could complaints have been prevented?
 - did the company act according to regulatory requirements?

Informal Complaint Activity 2010

- Complaints for electric, gas, water, telephone:
- Total **2010: 146,420**
 - **Consumer complaints** (billing, service, personnel, etc.): 13,341
 - **Payment arrangement requests (PAR)** (customer under threat of termination; needs PUC assistance to stop the termination and set up a payment agreements): 55,318
 - **Inquiries** (questions and opinions that require no investigation or follow-up: 77,761

Informal Complaint Activity 2007-10

Type of Contact	2007	2008	2009	2010
Inquiry	79,078	62,146	75,329	77,761
Consumer Complaints	20,634	20,529	18,147	13,341
Payment Arrangements	50,738	61,064	55,618	55,318
Total Activity	150,450	143,739	149,094	146,420

Informal Complaint Activity in 2010 by Industry:

INDUSTRY	CONSUMER COMPLAINTS	PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT REQUESTS
ELECTRIC	5,852	37,566
GAS	2,687	12,039
WATER	1,034	5,079
TELEPHONE	3,762	621

BCS Challenges

- ▣ Improve investigator training
- ▣ Improve quality of case handling
- ▣ Knowledge-transfer to transition BCS staff to replace retirements
- ▣ Aggressively monitor company behavior to assure compliance with regulatory requirements
- ▣ Automation – streamlining.

The Cycle of a Consumer/BCS Transaction

- ▣ Intake – Interview. BCS Call Center (toll free)
- ▣ Following a Dispute/Complaint through its Process
 - Intake Screens
 - Automated System (Exchange Data with Utilities)
 - Receipt of the Utility Report
 - Investigator Screens
 - Work-list,
 - Basic Complaint Data and Case Documentation,
 - Investigator> Required Steps to Resolution
 - End Result Options
 - Completed Case / Informal Complaint Decision
 - Compliance

Intake Screen ...Dispute

CC Info - CS3

Screens

CASE # 2752205
ACT/LAST NAME DISPUTE FIRST NAME CALLER3 MI
SERVICE ADDRESS 904 ELM STREET BETHLEHEM PA 18018

UGI CORP

COMPANY NAME UG I / GAS (NGDC) ACCOUNT NO. 513333837284
TERM/SUSP DATE ... PRIOR CASE CLOSED ... PRIOR CASE OR DOCKET NUMBER ...
REFERRED TO UNIVERSAL SERVICE PROGRAM N UNIT 1 INFORMAL COMPLAINT UNIT (ICU) LAST CO. CONTACT DATE ...
COMPANY POSITION CO STATES THAT TURN ON/TURN OFF FEE INCLUDES TRANSFER OF SERVICE - VALID CHARGE - COST OF HAVING TECH COME OUT TO READ METER
BRIEFLY DESCRIBE PROBLEM
SAFETY ISSUE? ☐ BILLING DISPUTE- CUSTOMER IS A LANDLORD. CUSTOMER CONTACTED COMPANY TO TRANSFER BILL INTO HIS NAME AFTER TENANT MOVED OUT. CUSTOMER WAS TOLD THAT IT WOULD COST \$40 TO CHANGE THE ADDRESS- CUSTOMER DISPUTES THE CHARGE AND FURTHER DISPUTES THE CHARGE LISTED ON HIS BILL AS A TURN ON/OFF FEE. THE SERVICES WERE NEVER STOPPED AND THE CUSTOMER WANTS THE DISPUTED CHARGES REMOVED.
CUSTOMER EXPENSE SCREEN? (Y/N) N HOUSEHOLD SIZE: ADULTS 0 CHILDREN 0 AGES
GROSS INC (SCE/AMT)
NET INCOME
REASON FOR CONTACT DESCRIPTION 18 ASSIGN TO SCHNECK CORNELIA

Jump To

GO

Options

SAVE

CASE SEARCH

CANCEL

PRINT SCREEN

Utility Exchange Process

- ▣ Intake Interviewers (call center) complete a “Case” Transaction
- ▣ Case Information is automatically/ electronically sent to the utility
- ▣ Utility gathers its information, including copies of any letters and reports sent to the customer
- ▣ Utility sends its report back to the PUC through the electronic exchange

Utility Exchange Process

- ▣ Utility information is tagged and attached to the BCS Case and is ready for the Investigator to start working the case
 - Estimated timeline for Utility Report Information
 - ▣ within 5 days if the customer is without service
 - ▣ Maximum allowance – no more than 30 days
- ▣ A utility may add / send additional documentation and information at any time after its initial report
- ▣ When an Investigator completes and closes a case, a transaction is generated to electronically send the decision to the utility and a written decision to the customer
 - Includes case closing details and the terms of the PUC's decision.

Investigator Screen - WorkList

Inv Case Assignment - CS29

INVESTIGATOR NAME: MARRAZZO LORI

PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)

CONTACT REASON

CLEAR SCREEN

Open/Closed Date Selection

OPEN DATE SELECTION ☒

CLOSED DATE SELECTION ☐

FROM 8/2/2010 ...

TO 10/22/2010 ...

☐ ALL CASES
 ☒ OPEN CASES ONLY
 ☐ CLOSED CASES ONLY

Multiple	Case Number	Company Name	Reason f	Open Date	Rpt Rec Date	Transfer Dat	Customer Name
N	2737252	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/8/2010	9/23/2010 7:1	**	PANTALONE, ANNETTE
N	2737896	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	74	9/9/2010	9/24/2010	**	FIRTH, LISA
N	2738945	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/13/2010	9/27/2010 7:1	**	MELENDEZ, CARLOS
N	2739009	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/13/2010	9/29/2010 1:1	**	VINO, DANIEL
N	2739895	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/14/2010	9/29/2010 7:1	**	GOBLE, ROY
N	2741004	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/16/2010	9/30/2010 3:1	**	GUTSHALL, JAMES
N	2741165	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/16/2010	10/1/2010 9:1	**	FIELD, KIESHA
N	2741303	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/16/2010	10/1/2010 11:	**	MCDONALD, ROBERT
N	2741563	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/17/2010	10/1/2010 3:1	**	HARRIS, RENARD
N	2741645	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/17/2010	10/5/2010	**	WILLIAMS, SHANNA
N	2741943	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/17/2010	10/4/2010 7:1	**	HABIBI, LYNNETTE
N	2743048	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	74	9/21/2010	10/6/2010 3:1	**	EPPS, JESSICA
N	2743060	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/21/2010	10/6/2010 3:1	**	DIAZ, KATHIE
N	2743288	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/21/2010	10/7/2010 1:1	**	CORDAS, TIMOTHY
N	2743371	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/21/2010	10/7/2010 3:1	**	WITMAN, NATHAN
N	2743437	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/21/2010	10/7/2010 5:1	**	HILLANBRAND, VANEDA
N	2743573	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	74	9/21/2010	10/8/2010 11:	**	GONZALEZ, WANDA
N	2743868	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	66	9/22/2010	10/8/2010 3:1	**	SCHEIB, PAULA
N	2743902	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	74	9/22/2010	10/8/2010	**	BLACK, BRENDA
N	2744187	PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC)	74	9/22/2010	10/11/2010 3:	**	GRAY, STEVEN

There are 216 records in the above table

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Options

CANCEL

GET CASES

CREATE EXCEL

\\pucdocserver\BCS5

Investigator Screen

Documentation - CS08

Screens

CASE # 2752205
LAST NAME DISPUTE
FIRST NAME CALLER3
MI
Case Info

PRIMARY COMPANY NAME ACCOUNT NUMBER COMPANY CONTACT DATE COMPANY REPORT RECEIVED DATE
Y UG I / GAS (NGDC) 513333837284 10/12/2010 ... 10/15/2010 ...

ACTION DATE 10/19/2010 1:56:11 PM ...
☐ DO YOU NEED TO FOLLOW UP?
FOLLOW UP REQUIRED BY ...

☐ LINK DO CUMENT
☐ FLAG ACTION FOR INVESTIGATOR

PROBLEM DESCRIPTION
INVESTIGATION DESCRIPTION

CASE SUSTAINED **** COMPANY MUST CREDIT THE CUSTOMER'S ACCOUNT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$37.00 (TRANSFER OF SERVICE FEE). ACCORDING TO THE COMPANY TARIFF SECTION 9.15: A CHANGE OF CUSTOMER CHARGE MAY BE ASSESSED FOR 37.00 (1/4 HOUR) IF THE NEW PARTY REQUESTING SERVICE REQUESTS THE COMPANY TO READ THE METER. THE CHARGE DOES NOT APPLY IF THE COMPANY ACCEPTS THE CUSTOMERS METER READING. MICHAEL PASCO DID NOT REQUEST THE METER TO BE READ, NOR DID THE COMPANY ADVISE HIM THAT IF HE WOULD SUPPLY A CUSTOMER METER READING THE FEE COULD BE WAIVED.

ACTION DATE	UPDATED BY	INVESTIGATOR DESCRIPTION
10/19/2010 2:50 PM	ADMINISTRATOR	UGIG- Closingcase information sent on 10/19/2010 in file UGIG_CL_10192010_145
10/19/2010 2:22 PM	CORNELIA SCHNECK	LINKED DOCUMENT 2752205-CSCHNECK_PASCO.DOCX
10/19/2010 1:56 PM	CORNELIA SCHNECK	CASE SUSTAINED **** COMPANY MUST CREDIT THE CUSTOMER'S ACC
10/19/2010 1:48 PM	CORNELIA SCHNECK	SPOKE TO CUSTOMER, MICHAEL PASCO. MR. PASCO STATED THAT HE
10/19/2010 1:21 PM	CORNELIA SCHNECK	EMAIL TO CO: THAT THE CUSTOMER MUST HAVE HAD PRIOR SERVICE
10/19/2010 1:20 PM	CORNELIA SCHNECK	REPLY FROM CO. IN THE TARIFF SECTION 9.15 INDICATES THE CHARGE

Jump To
GO
Options
SAVE CASE SEARCH CANCEL CLEAR PRINT SCREEN VIEW VIEW PRIOR CASES

RECEIPT of UTILITY REPORT ... PAR

PPL (EDC - ELECTRIC) EGW FULL PAR REPORT

BCS Investigator: LORI MARRAZZO

BCS Case Number: 2745547 BCS Sent: 9/24/2010

BCS Received: 10/13/2010 1:16 PM

Prepared By: Linda Eibach

Phone: 570-496-7852

Prepared Date: 10/13/2010

GENERAL INFORMATION		Account Number: 1393028013	
Cust Name: CALLER 2 PAYMENT ARRANGEMENT		Type of Account: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> LL/Tenant	
Svc Addr: 17 RIDGE ST NUANGOLA MOUNTAIN TOP, PA 18707		<input type="checkbox"/> General/Commercial/Industrial	
		Heating: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Service: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On <input type="checkbox"/> Off
Mail Addr:		Total Account Balance: \$1,000.63	
		Term Date: 9/30/2010 Budget: \$224.00	
		CB Due Date: 10/8/2010	

Total Gross Income:

Date Obtained: 9/24/2010

Adults 1

Children: 0

Family Size: 1

Payment Information

Amt to update most recent agreement: \$610.04

CAP Amount:

Recent Payments

09/23/10 \$200.00

08/10/10 \$100.00

07/29/10 \$100.00

06/30/10 \$200.00

06/17/10 \$100.00

04/20/10 \$244.00

Final report information

Did the company refer this customer to the Universal Service Program? ☐ Yes ☒ No

Date of last contact with customer prior to current BCS complaint: 9/24/2010

Did the customer accurately state the company position at last contact? ☒ Yes ☐ No

What did the company tell the customer at time of last contact?

On 9/24/10 the CSR spoke with the customer and updated ability to pay. The CSR requested \$326.00 by 9/29/10 to stop termination for 9/30/10, then BB+\$15.00 beginning 10/8/10 (284.04). The customer did not agree and no offer was made. No CIC reported; No dispute no OUR. No medical condition.

Company Final Position:

\$610.04 then BB + \$15.00 beginning with the next bill. C/U amount includes the current bill due 10/8/10.

Prior PUC case# 2100847 closed 7/27/06. Satisfied.

Cust is not eligible for the Ontrack program since she is reporting no income. OT requires income to be placed on program. ***** CUSTOMER DISPUTE INFORMATION FOLLOWS

***** Cust is not eligible for the Ontrack program since she is reporting no income. OT requires income to be placed on program.

RECEIPT of UTILITY REPORT...Dispute

UG I / GAS (NGDC)

EGW INFORMAL COMPLAINT REPORT

BCS Investigator: CORNELIA SCHNECK

BCS Case Number: 2752205

BCS Sent: 10/12/2010

BCS Received: 10/15/2010 4:16 PM

Prepared By: Heather Wolfe

Phone: 610-736-5729

Prepared Date: 10/15/2010

Customer Name: CALLER3 DISPUTE

Account Number: 513333837284

Service Address: 904 ELM STREET
BETHLEHEM, PA 18018

Heating ☒ Yes ☐ No

Rate: Residential

Budget: \$31.00

Mailing Address: 3106 SOUTH 3RD STREET
WHITEHALL, PA 18052

Current Bill Due Date: 10/15/2010

Total Account Balance: \$9.60

Phone (Home): 610-264-5434

(Work):

DETAILS OF THE COMPANY'S ORIGINAL INVESTIGATION

Michael called on 08/31/10 to establish service into his name. At this time, Michael was quoted the \$37.00 transferred of service fee.

LAST COMPANY CONTACT INFORMATION

Last Contact Date: 10/12/2010

No Contact

CUSTOMER'S DISPUTE TO BCS

BILLING DISPUTE - CU IS LANDLORD - CU CONTACTED CO TO TRANSFER BILL INTO HIS NAME AFTER TENANT MOVED OUT - CU TOLD WOULD COST \$40 TO CHANGE ADDRESS - CU DISPUTES CHARGE - CU FUTHER DISPUTES AS LISTED ON BILL AS TURN ON/TURN OFF FEE - SERVICES WERE NEVER STOPPED - CU WANTS CHARGE REMOVED

DETAILS OF THE COMPANY'S INVESTIGATION AFTER BCS CONTACT

COMPANY'S FINAL POSITION TO BCS

It is the company's position that proper procedures were followed. Per the company's tariff it is permitted to charge the \$37.00 transfer of service fee. The company request payment in full for this fee.

Required Steps to Resolution

- ▣ Investigator reviews :
 - The customer's complaint in detail
 - The utility provided information/report for completeness
 - Relevant regulations and utility tariffs
- ▣ The utility report must respond to the complainant's allegations and demonstrate compliance with relevant regulations.
- ▣ The investigator may need to make several contacts with the customer and utility before being able to make an informed decision

Possible End Result

- ▣ Dismissal
- ▣ Letter
- ▣ Payment Agreement
Decision
- ▣ Informal Decision

Required Steps to Resolution

- ▣ If a decision has been rendered, all parties of the complaint receive a copy
- ▣ Any party of the complaint may appeal the decision (and file a **Formal Complaint**) before an administrative law judge in formal proceedings
- ▣ After the Informal case is closed, the case is reviewed, evaluated, and processed by the Policy Division staff to identify trends and compliance issues

End Result for this Case ...PAR

- ▣ The customer's total arrearage was \$1,000.63
- ▣ A decision was rendered that included a Payment Agreement requiring the customer to pay his monthly budget bill plus \$224.00 each month until the account is paid in full
 - ▣ Payments are to be paid by the due date of each regular monthly bill
 - ▣ If payments are not made in full and on time the company may pursue termination (shut off)

End Result for this Case ...Dispute

- Upon review of the company tariff, the investigator found that the company was wrong. The company may not apply a service charge where they have accepted a customer provided meter reading to close an account
- The customer was not given the option by the company to provide a meter reading upon the service disconnect (shut off)
- The informal complaint was sustained and the company was required to credit the customer's account

End Result for this Case ...PAR Decision

INFORMAL COMPLAINT DECISION THE PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

CALLER2 PAYMENTARRANGEMENT
17 RIDGE ST
MOUNTAIN TOP PA 18707

Date: 10/22/2010

BCS: 2745547

Acct. No: 1393028013

V.

PPL UTILITIES

You contacted the Public Utility Commission asking for help in preventing the termination of your utility service. We looked into your records with the company and decided that:

- Your total account balance is \$1000.63. This balance does not include any payments or bills sent out on or after 10/13/2010.
- Beginning DECEMBER 2010 DUE DATE, you must pay the company a special budget amount of \$266.00 per month. This special budget amount includes your regular budget amount of \$224.00 per month, plus a set amount of \$42.00 that will be paid toward the account balance. Because your regular budget amount is based on your monthly usage, this amount may change depending on any change in the amount of service you use.
- If you selected an Electric Generation Supplier other than PPL UTILITIES, you may owe additional supplier charges each month. Failure to pay supplier charges may result in your service being terminated. Please check your bill carefully.
- You must make all payments by the due date of each month's bill and continue making the payments until you pay the account in full.
- If you break this payment agreement, the company may shut off your service. If the company shuts off your service, they may make you pay your full bill plus a reconnect fee and a deposit to restore service.
- By law you must pay any current bills due before this payment arrangement starts.

LORI MARRAZZO
Investigator

End Result for this Case

...Dispute Decision

INFORMAL COMPLAINT DECISION THE PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

CALLER3 DISPUTE
3106 SOUTH 3RD STREET
WHITEHALL PA 18052

Date: 10/21/2010

V.

BCS: 2752205

UGI CORP

Acct. No: 513333837284

DECISION ON INFORMAL COMPLAINT BY THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION:

The Public Utility Commission received your informal complaint on 10/12/2010. In the complaint, you state that:

You are the landlord for a property located at 904 Elm Street, Bethlehem, PA. You contacted the company to transfer the bill into your name after the tenant had moved out. The company indicated that a \$40.00 fee to change the address would be applied to the account. You are disputing this charge. On the bill the fee is listed as a turn on/turn off fee, but the service was never disconnected. You want the charge to be removed.

Our office investigated your complaint and reached a decision; THEREFORE, IT IS DECIDED:

- 1) That this informal complaint is sustained.
- 2) That the company's tariff section 9.15 states as follows: Change of Customer Charge. The company may assess its service charge of ¼ hours (\$37.00) if the new party requesting service requests the company to read the meter. The charge does not apply if the company accepts the customer's meter readings. (see attachments)
- 3) That the customer did not request the company read the meter. The company did not give the customer the option to provide a customer meter reading.
- 4) That the company must credit the customer's account in the amount of \$37.00.

We will send a copy of this decision to the utility company. If you have questions about the terms of this decision or how to appeal this decision, please call us at 1-800-692-7380.

CORNELIA SCHNECK
Investigator

Compliance Problems?

- ▣ Informal complaints are reviewed to determine if the utility followed applicable regulations in handling the customer's account and dispute.
- ▣ If a possible compliance problem is detected, the utility is notified of the concern and provided an opportunity to respond.
- ▣ Bureau staff will work informally with the utility to attempt to get any compliance problem corrected.
- ▣ More formal methods to gain compliance can be used if needed. This includes forwarding the matter to PUC prosecutors and/or the filing of a formal complaint, etc.

Questions?

Daniel Mumford

- ▣ Field Review Manager
- ▣ Bureau of Consumer Services
- ▣ 717-783-1957
- ▣ dmumford@pa.gov

