



## **WINTER TERMINATION PROGRAM**

**The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities, also known as the “BOARD”, has a shut-off protection program available to eligible residential customers during the winter months. This program, which prevents the shut-off of electric and/or gas heating service, is known as the “WINTER TERMINATION PROGRAM”, or “WTP” for *short*.**

## **THE RULE**

**The WTP states, in N.J.A.C. 14:3-7.12A:**

- **All New Jersey electric & gas utilities shall not discontinue the service of residential customers from November 15 through March 15 if they qualify for the Winter Termination Program.**
- *The Board may extend the date beyond March 15 due to weather related conditions. Most recently, in 2003, the Board extended the March 15<sup>th</sup> date to April 15<sup>th</sup>.*

- In order to be eligible for the WTP, a residential customer of a regulated gas or electric utility in New Jersey must receive benefits from any of the following established categories:

- 1) The Lifeline Credit Program; (Lifeline)
- 2) The Federal Home Energy Assistance Program; (LIHEAP)
- 3) The Work First New Jersey-Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; (TANF)
- 4) The Federal Supplemental Security Income; (SSI)
- 5) The Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled; (PAAD)
- 6) The Work First New Jersey/General Assistance benefits; (GA)
- 7) The Universal Service Fund; (USF)

or

- 8) Persons unable to pay their utility bills because of circumstances beyond their control.

# **THE WTP BUDGET PLAN**

- Under the WTP, all residential electric or gas customers who are eligible for the WTP shall enroll in a 12-month budget payment plan with their utility. These customers must make good faith payments toward their WTP budget during the heating season, if they have the ability to do so.
- The utility shall refer to the Board for resolution, all disputes regarding the appropriate level of down payments.
- Until the Board has rendered a determination, the utility must not discontinue service during the heating season.
- **\*\*\*IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE, WTP eligible customers are allowed to make a down payment of UP TO 25% of their outstanding balance, as a condition for entering into a WTP budget plan.**

## CUSTOMERS DISCONNECTED AS OF NOVEMBER 15TH

- *An important aspect of the Board's Winter Termination Program allows for any eligible WTP customer who has been disconnected as of November 15<sup>th</sup> to have his or her service restored if enrolled in a payment plan. The customer must enroll in a 12-month budget plan, and make a down payment of up to 25% of the total outstanding balance of the bill. The utility shall also consider the customer's ability to pay when setting up the payment plan.*

## **SECURITY DEPOSITS**

- **During the heating season, electric and gas utilities shall NOT request a security deposit from an eligible WTP customer.**
- **During the heating season, electric and gas utilities shall NOT request an additional amount to an existing security deposit from a WTP eligible customer.**

# DISCONTINUANCE NOTICES

- During the heating season, all discontinuance notices generated by utilities to residential gas and/or electric customers must be accompanied by a Winter Termination Program Fact Sheet.
- *The Fact Sheet, which is printed in both English and Spanish for customers, must set forth all terms and conditions of the Winter Termination Program. Fact Sheets are reviewed and approved by the Board yearly.*