**Section 9. Discontinuation of Service to Customers.**

(a)               Unless otherwise ordered by the Commission, no utility shall terminate service to any customer for violating the utility's rules and regulations or for nonpayment of bills for service until the utility has given at least seven calendar days' notice to residential customers or three calendar days' to commercial or industrial customers.

(b)              Notice shall be effective when a copy is provided to the customer in person, by telephone after customer verification, or received by U.S. mail at the customer's last known mailing address. Additional notice may be provided electronically. The notice shall contain:

(i)                The name of the person whose account is delinquent and the service address to be discontinued;

(ii)              The rule or regulation that was violated or the amount of the delinquent bill;

(iii)           The effective date of the notice and the date on or after which service is to be discontinued;

(iv)            The utility's specific address and telephone number for information regarding how to avoid service discontinuation;

(v)              The names of agencies or organizations that have notified the utility that they render assistance to eligible persons who are unable to pay their utility bills; and

(vi)            A statement advising the customer how to contact the Commission if discontinuation is disputed.

(c)               For residential customers, the notice shall inform the customer that, if prior to the initial date for the discontinuation, the customer provides the utility with written verification from a health care provider responsible for the care of a customer or his/her co-habitants stating that their health or safety would be seriously endangered if service were discontinued, the utility shall extend the date for discontinuation set forth in the notice by 15 days (22 days total) to allow for

bill payment.

(d)              The utility shall attempt to make actual contact with the customer either in person or by telephone after customer identity verification before discontinuing service during the cold weather period of November 1 through April 30.

(e)               The utility shall also provide notice of discontinuation or account delinquency to a third party if a customer, or person acting for the customer, has requested the utility do so after customer identity verification. The utility shall establish reasonable procedures to advise customers, particularly any incapacitated customer, that the right to request third-party notification does not create third-party liability for payment.

(f)               If the customer defaults, the utility shall provide the discontinuation notice to any guarantor and customer simultaneously. The guarantor's service shall not be subject to discontinuation as a result of the customer's default.

(g)              The utility shall remove a guarantor when:

(i)                The customer has received 12 consecutive months of service with no cause for discontinuation, bills have been paid when due and the customer passes an objective credit screen;

(ii)              The guarantor has paid all amounts due for service through the date the utility receives the request to terminate the guarantor agreement; or

(iii)           An additional agreement with the utility is in place.

(h)              The utility may discontinue service between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday, without further notice when:

(i)                The notification period has elapsed and the delinquent account has not been

paid;

(ii)              Acceptable payment arrangements have not been made with the utility; or

(iii)           The utility is not satisfied the customer has ceased violating the utility's rules and regulations.

(j)                The utility shall not discontinue service for bill nonpayment:

(i)                On a legal holiday or the day before;

(ii)              During the period from December 24 through January 2, inclusive;

(iii)           On any day the utility cannot reconnect service;

(iv)            If the customer enters into an agreement with the utility for payment of the delinquent billing over a reasonable time and the customer complies with the payment arrangements;

(v)              If the customer owes the utility money due to a meter or other billing error and the customer complies with payment arrangements;

(vi)            At a previous address for a different class of service;

(vii)         Of non-utility service or merchandise;

(viii)       If a customer is paying bills on time, even though a former customer with an undisputed delinquent bill for service resides or conducts business at the same address;

(ix)            If a utility bill is in dispute and the customer duly pays the utility bill or bill portion that is not in dispute; or

(x)              If the temperature is forecasted by the National Weather Service or other reputable source to be below 32° F in the impending 48 hours, or if conditions are otherwise especially dangerous to health, and the customer is:

(A)            A residential customer;

(B)             A non-residential customer providing service essential for the protection of public health, safety or welfare;

(C)             Unable to pay for service in accordance with the utility's billing requirements and is actively seeking government assistance or has exhausted such assistance; or

(D)            Able to pay for service in installments only.

(k)              The utility shall assist elderly and handicapped persons who are unable to pay their utility bills with determining available government assistance.

(l)                A utility may discontinue service to a customer without advance notice for reasons of safety, health, cooperation with civil authorities, fraudulent use, tampering with or destroying utility service facilities or customer's failure to comply with utility curtailment procedures during supply shortage.

(m)            Upon a customer's or legally authorized person's request, the utility shall make reasonable efforts to terminate the customer's service as requested. Before terminating service, the utility shall inform the customer of any additional charges per tariff for after-hours service discontinuation.