



NEWS & INFORMATION

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IUB ready to assist customers with unresolved utility questions, issues

Utility customers with issues or questions about utility service should always contact the utility provider first. When that doesn't provide resolution, the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) can help. IUB utility customer service analysts are available and trained to answer questions, investigate complaints, and help resolve differences between customers and utility providers.

The IUB is the state agency that regulates certain electric, natural gas, and telephone utilities and one water utility in Iowa. The Board's staff directly assists customers by providing information and investigating complaints. Many customer contacts involve disconnection of utility services for which the IUB has detailed rules on disconnection of natural gas, electric, water, and telephone service. These rules protect customers from arbitrary and potentially dangerous disconnection. For example, utilities must delay disconnection when the National Weather Service forecasts temperatures of 20 degrees Fahrenheit or colder for the area during the next 24 hours. Utilities must also offer customers a reasonable payment agreement to avoid disconnection in certain circumstances, provide a certain amount of time to receive payment for service, and provide customer notice of pending disconnection. But these rules also give utilities the right to timely payment for service they provide.

The IUB can also help customers avoid being victimized by commonplace telephone marketing and billing deceptions. This includes switching a customer's local or long distance provider (slamming) and adding or charging optional services to a customer's account (cramming), without the customer's knowledge or permission. The IUB has lawful authority to fine companies found guilty of these unethical and unlawful practices and to stop them from providing service in Iowa.

The IUB also helps customers who have disputes about their utility bills and can provide referral or helpful information to customers with complaints that are outside of the IUB's jurisdiction. The IUB can also provide additional information about proceedings that are pending with the IUB, which may involve utility proposed rate changes, service changes, or plant or infrastructure construction.

After attempting to resolve issues through the utility or service provider, customers who still have questions or concerns may contact the IUB for assistance toll free at 1-877-565-4450, iubcustomer@iub.state.ia.us, or 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0069.

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