



WHAT DOES PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION (PUC) OVERSIGHT MEAN FOR PITTSBURGH WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY (PWSA) CUSTOMERS?

Act 65 of 2017 directed the PUC to begin oversight of PWSA on April 1, 2018. The PUC now regulates PWSA like a public utility under the Public Utility Code, including assisting customers with billing and service complaints.

Similar to other regulated public utilities, PWSA will operate under a tariff for its water and wastewater service. These tariffs will be subject to the PUC's formal ratemaking process to determine just and reasonable rates for PWSA customers and to determine the rules under which PWSA will provide water and wastewater service.

These rules include customer service procedures to assist customers with complaints about billing, service, and suspension or termination of service.

WHAT ARE MY PWSA CUSTOMER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES?

YOUR RIGHTS INCLUDE:

- ◆ Fair credit and security deposit policies;
- ◆ Safe and reasonably continuous utility service;
- ◆ Accurate billing for services;
- ◆ Ability to question and dispute your bill's accuracy with the utility; and
- ◆ Right to a fair and prompt resolution of billing or service problems, including seeking assistance from the PUC.

While PWSA has the responsibility to honor these rights, as a customer, you too have responsibilities to maintain your water and wastewater service.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- ◆ Paying your bill in full and on time;
- ◆ Providing the utility with access to its meter or other equipment; and
- ◆ Giving at least seven days of notice before moving or discontinuing service.

TERMINATION OF SERVICE RIGHTS:

PWSA HAS THE RIGHT TO SHUT OFF YOUR SERVICE IF YOU FAIL TO:

- ◆ Pay your bill in full and on time;
- ◆ Follow through on payment arrangements;
- ◆ Pay a deposit when required; or
- ◆ Allow the company access to its equipment.

Note: Emergency situations and theft of service are grounds for immediate service termination with little or no notice.

If you have difficulty paying your PWSA bill, or are not making payments for any other reason, call PWSA as soon as possible. By notifying PWSA immediately, you may avoid service termination.

WHAT IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT – CAN THE PUC HELP WITH MY COMPLAINT?

YES, but only if you try to work it out with PWSA first. If you are not satisfied with the resolution after contacting PWSA, you have the option to seek assistance with the PUC. There are two kinds of assistance offered by the PUC: Informal and Formal Complaints.

WHAT IS THE PUC CONSUMER COMPLAINT PROCESS?

INFORMAL COMPLAINTS:

- ◆ If you are not satisfied with the PWSA decision, you may file an informal complaint with the PUC’s Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS) at 1-800-692-7380 or online at www.puc.pa.gov.
- ◆ After you contact BCS, a BCS representative will examine the information you provided.
- ◆ BCS also will contact PWSA to give it a chance to respond.
- ◆ BCS will then inform you and PWSA of its conclusion either by telephone or by mail in a letter.

PWSA customers who are not satisfied with a BCS decision on an informal complaint can appeal that decision by filing a formal complaint directly to the PUC using the PUC Formal Complaint Form.

FORMAL COMPLAINTS:

- ◆ You may file a formal complaint in writing either by mail, to 400 North St., Harrisburg, PA 17120, or by visiting the PUC online at www.puc.pa.gov. Formal complaints can be filed at any time with the Secretary of the Commission; however, if you wish to appeal a BCS decision, you must file the “Notification of Intent to Appeal” form sent with the BCS informal decision.
- ◆ The formal complaint process involves a legal proceeding where you may present evidence and argument to a PUC administrative law judge (ALJ) at an evidentiary hearing. Consumers may represent themselves or engage an attorney; however, non-lawyers, including relatives and friends, cannot represent anyone but themselves. The ALJ will then render an initial decision and the five PUC Commissioners may then rule on the ALJ’s decision at a Public Meeting.

WHAT ABOUT CUSTOMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR INCOME QUALIFYING RESIDENTS?

PWSA has partnered with the Dollar Energy Fund to administer a PWSA Hardship Program to help customers with paying their water and sewage bills. For more information please contact PWSA at (412) 255-2423 or visit www.dollarenergy.org.

For more details and information on filing informal and formal complaints, and for other educational resources, go to the PUC’s website (www.puc.pa.gov), or call the Bureau of Consumer Services Hotline at 1-800-692-7380.

WHAT ABOUT LEAD IN DRINKING WATER?

Lead contamination in drinking water is something that the PUC and the PA Department of Environmental Protection take VERY SERIOUSLY. It is a public health and safety matter. Water utilities across the country are diligently working to address this critical issue. The PUC supports PWSA replacement of both company-owned and customer-owned lead service lines. The PUC encourages all public utilities to accelerate the replacement of lead lines in water distribution systems. If you are concerned that you have a lead service line, please contact PWSA at (412) 255-2423 regarding its Lead Line Replacement Assistance Programs.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION:

WRITE

PA Public Utility Commission
Bureau of Consumer Services
400 North Street
Harrisburg, PA 17120

CALL

1-800-692-7380

For people with speech or hearing loss, dial
7-1-1 (Telecommunications RelayService)



WEBSITE

www.puc.pa.gov

