

## **Winter Reconnect Order: Maintain Your Electric and Natural Gas Service**

### **What is the Winter Reconnect Order?**

The Winter Reconnect Order has been issued by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) on an annual basis. The order allows residential customers who are disconnected or being threatened with disconnection the opportunity to pay a designated amount to have their service restored or maintained.

### **Who offers the Winter Reconnect Order?**

All regulated natural gas and electric companies must comply with the Winter Reconnect Order.

### **When can the Winter Reconnect Order be used?**

The Winter Reconnect Order may be used once during each heating season, which runs from mid-October through mid-April.

### **How much is a customer required to pay with the Winter Reconnect Order?**

Residential customers are required to pay no more than \$175 to maintain service under the reconnection order. If the customer's service has already been disconnected, the customer must pay the \$175 and possibly a reconnection fee of no more than \$36 to restore service.

Customers requesting new natural gas or electric service, who have no previous balance with their utility, may establish service under the winter reconnect order by paying \$175, rather than paying the required security deposit. Such customers may have the remaining balance of the security deposit added to their next month's bill.

### **What is a reconnection charge?**

A reconnection charge is one that has been approved by and is on file with the PUCO. The Winter Reconnect Order procedures do not allow companies to charge more than they otherwise are allowed in their filing as a reconnection charge. Any company that does not have a reconnection charge may not assess one. If the company's approved tariff reconnection charge is greater than \$36, the balance of the reconnection charge may be billed to the customer the following month.

### **Who is eligible to use the Winter Reconnect Order?**

There is no income eligibility requirement to use the Winter Reconnect Order. Any residential customer who is served by a regulated utility company may use the Winter Reconnect Order, while it is in effect, to establish, maintain, or restore service. Customers that have multiple residential accounts may only utilize the winter reconnection order to establish, maintain, or reconnect service at the property where they reside.

### **How does a customer sign up for the Winter Reconnect Order?**

There is no sign up required. If a residential customer's service has been disconnected for non-payment or is being threatened with disconnection, he or she may pay the required \$175 (plus any applicable reconnection charge not to exceed \$36) to the utility company and follow the company's procedures to get reconnected. If paying at an authorized agent, the customer will also need to call the utility with the receipt number to report the payment.

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### **Can the \$175 payment be made by an agency?**

Yes. If a customer is at or below 175 percent of the federal poverty guideline, he or she is eligible to use the Emergency Home Energy Assistance Program (E-HEAP) funds to pay the \$175.

### **What if the customer owes more than \$175 to the utility company?**

If a customer is on the Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus (PIPP Plus) or wishes to reenroll in the program, the customer is responsible for making an additional payment of no more than \$50 per utility if they owe more than \$175 in PIPP Plus default. Utility companies must offer payment plan options to non-PIPP customers.

### **Can the utility company require a security deposit before reconnecting service?**

Yes. However, the total amount the company may require a customer to pay, including the security deposit, may not exceed the Winter Reconnect Order amount for reconnection (\$175 plus a possible reconnection fee of no more than \$36).