



Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

Your Residential Utility Consumer Advocate

CONSUMERS' FACT SHEET

Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel

10 West Broad Street
Suite 1800, Columbus, OH
43215-3485

E-MAIL:
occ@occ.state.oh.us

WEBSITE:
www.pickocc.org

UTILITY ASSISTANCE FOR MILITARY FAMILIES



Of the many things to be arranged before leaving for active military duty, utilities may be forgotten. But not making arrangements can cause a financial hardship for the families of military personnel. Some Ohio utilities have plans that can assist families who lose an income because a member of their household is away on active duty. While most utility companies will work with consumers in this situation to make payment arrangements on a case-by-case basis, some utility companies have established special programs to assist military personnel and their families.

Electric

American Electric Power (AEP) will assist military families who show financial hardships because a family member is on active duty. AEP will extend payment arrangements up to six months for customers or household members who are on active duty.

Dayton Power and Light (DP&L) will not disconnect residential utility service because of nonpayment for any military reservist or member of the National Guard deployed on active duty. The customer must provide a copy of his/her deployment orders. DP&L will make arrangements to allow the customer a period of time equal to his/her deployment to pay any debt that may have accumulated.

Duke Energy Ohio has a Military Deferred Payment Program available for soldiers (or their dependents) on a case-by-case basis. To be eligible, proof of deployment is required. The assistance provided by the program is limited to the household where military personnel reside. Benefits of the program may include suspension of payment requirements for 60 days, waiving late charges and/or security deposits, the establishment of a flexible payment program for no more than 12 months and/or the postponement of disconnection. This program is available for both electric and natural gas services provided by Duke.

FirstEnergy gives special consideration to military families by establishing payment arrangements for those who have a soldier deployed on active duty. The arrangements can range from no payments to partial payments depending on the situation. FirstEnergy also will block the account from being disconnected for nonpayment.

In addition, FirstEnergy offers a Community Connections Program for its customers who have a member of the household on active duty. This program provides the following free services:

- ▶ Roof repairs or replacements;
- ▶ Electrical upgrades;

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The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), the residential utility consumer advocate, represents the interests of 4.5 million households in proceedings before state and federal regulators and in the courts.

The state agency also educates consumers about electric, natural gas, telephone and water issues.

For more information, please visit the OCC website at www.pickocc.org.



The Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services.

- ▶ Replacement of inefficient refrigerators, freezers and electric stoves; and
- ▶ Installation of compact fluorescent light bulbs.

To be eligible, the household must be a FirstEnergy customer and include one of the following:

- ▶ An active duty serviceman, servicewoman or spouse;
- ▶ Guardian(s) of the children of an active duty serviceman, servicewoman; or
- ▶ A dependent family member of an active duty serviceman or servicewoman.

FirstEnergy customers can call toll free 1-866-326-3237 for more information.

Natural Gas

Columbia Gas of Ohio will delay collection on the accounts of active military personnel for 12 months. Upon return from active duty, the customer will receive a 12-month payment plan.

Dominion East Ohio Gas (DEO) has a Military Deployment Plan for customers which includes a payment plan option. Customers with financial hardship because of pending or military deployment can have credit action suspended. A copy of deployment papers will need to be sent to DEO. Notices

will continue to be sent to the customer, but no collection action will be taken. Late payments will not be assessed and deposits will not be requested.

A payment agreement will be established and the account will be monitored until the end of the customer's deployment period.

Vectren Energy Delivery of Ohio will protect the accounts of customers or a household member of active duty military personnel from being disconnected for nonpayment. Once Vectren learns a customer has been deployed, it will not assess late payment fees.

Documentation of active military duty is required. When the deployment ends, Vectren will make payment arrangements that can be extended up to two times the length of the deployment period or the deployment period plus one year, whichever is less.

Telephone

Windstream will waive one-time charges, such as reconnection and disconnection fees, for military personnel who disconnect and/or reconnect their service due to military deployment.

Other Resources

If your utility companies are not listed here, the OCC recommends contacting them to make payment arrangements or to ask that fees be dropped.

