

16. Whether or not the telephone system serving the office has automated call distribution capability for the entire office or for specific departments. If so, the utility shall supply a brief description of the method of call distribution;

17. Whether or not the telephone system places incoming calls in queue, and, if so, the maximum number of callers that can be placed in queue;

18. Whether or not the telephone system has an automated response unit (ARU) and, if so, a brief description of the routing options available to callers through the ARU;

19. Whether or not the telephone system provides recorded messages to callers and a description of the message provided;

20. Whether or not telephone answering machines or devices are used and, if so, the hours in which they are used and the departments in which they are used; and

21. If a telephone answering service is used:

i. The name and address of the answering service and the hours during which said service is used. In addition, the utility shall indicate whether or not the answering service receives all incoming calls or for specific departments;

ii. The information required pursuant to (i) above shall be provided to the Board within 90 days of the effective date of this rule and annually thereafter;

iii. Each utility shall, within 30 days, inform the Board of any substantive change in the information filed pursuant to this section.

New Rule, R.1997 d.39, effective February 3, 1997.

See: 28 N.J.R. 1810(a), 29 N.J.R. 449(a).

Amended by R.2002 d.280, effective September 16, 2002.

See: 34 N.J.R. 992(a), 34 N.J.R. 3216(b).

In (a), substituted "On January 1 and July 1 of each year, each" for "Each" and inserted "and Class A wastewater".

(c) The amount of a deposit shall be reasonably related to the probable charge for service during a billing period based upon the average monthly charge over an estimated 12 month service period increased by one month's average bill.

As amended, R.1978 d.155, effective May 16, 1978.

See: 9 N.J.R. 290(e), 10 N.J.R. 261(e).

Amended by R.1997 d.39, effective February 3, 1997.

See: 28 N.J.R. 1810(a), 29 N.J.R. 449(a).

Substantially amended (c).

#### 14:3-7.2 Deposits to insure credit of new customers

If a customer whose credit has not been established applies for service, the initial deposit shall be the estimated average bill of the customer for a billing period, based upon the average monthly charge over an estimated 12 month service period increased by one month's average bill. In determining the amount of deposit, except in the case of telephone utilities, there shall be excluded from the average bill such portion thereof, if any, for which payment is received in advance. If the actual bills of the customer subsequently rendered prove that the deposit is either insufficient or excessive, the deposit may be changed in accordance with the facts.

Amended by R.1997 d.39, effective February 3, 1997.

See: 28 N.J.R. 1810(a), 29 N.J.R. 449(a).

Substantially amended section.

#### 14:3-7.3 Customers in default

(a) Customers in default in the payment of bills may be required to furnish a deposit or increase their existing deposit in an amount sufficient to secure the payment of future bills. The amount of such deposit shall be determined in accordance with the principle set forth in N.J.A.C. 14:3-7.1. Service shall not be discontinued for failure to make such deposit except after proper notice.

(b) If a customer who has made a deposit fails to pay a bill, the utility may apply such deposit insofar as is necessary to liquidate the bill and may require that the deposit be restored to its original amount.

Amended by R.1997 d.39, effective February 3, 1997.

See: 28 N.J.R. 1810(a), 29 N.J.R. 449(a).

#### 14:3-7.4 Receipts and records

The utility shall furnish a receipt to each customer who has made a deposit. Where return of the deposit is made in cash, surrender of the receipt or, in lieu thereof, proof of identity may be required.

#### 14:3-7.5 Return of deposits

(a) Upon closing any account the balance of any deposit remaining after the closing bill for service has been settled shall be returned promptly to the depositor with interest due.

### SUBCHAPTER 7. BILLS AND PAYMENTS FOR SERVICE

#### 14:3-7.1 Deposits for metered and telephone service

(a) If after notice of the methods of establishing credit and being afforded an opportunity, a customer has not established credit, the utility may require a reasonable deposit as a condition of supplying service.

(b) The credit established, by whatever method, shall apply at any location within the area of the utility furnishing the service; that is, service is not to be regarded as restricted to a particular location.

(b) Each utility shall review a residential customer's account at least once every year and a nonresidential customer's account at least once every two years and if such review indicates that the customer has established credit satisfactory to the utility, then the outstanding deposit shall be refunded to the customer. Each utility shall afford its customers the option of having the deposit refund applied to the customer's account in the form of a credit or of having the deposit refunded by separate check in a period not to exceed one billing cycle.

(c) Simple interest at a rate equal to the average yields on new six month Treasury Bills for the 12 month period ending each September 30 shall be paid by the utility on all deposits held by it, provided the deposit has remained with the utility for at least three months. Said rate shall become effective on January 1 of the following year. The Board shall perform the annual calculation to determine the applicable interest rate and shall notify the affected public utilities of said rate.

1. Interest on deposits previously collected and held by the public utility shall be apportioned so that the computed interest rate shall be based upon the average yields on new six month Treasury Bills, beginning the following January 1.

2. Interest payments shall be made at least once during each 12 month period in which a deposit is held and shall take the form of credits on bills toward utility service rendered or to be rendered. The effect of this subsection shall be limited to those deposits, if any, held by electric, gas, telephone and water utilities to secure residential accounts.

As amended, R.1978 d.155, effective May 16, 1978.

See: 9 N.J.R. 290(e), 10 N.J.R. 261(e).

As amended, R.1979 d.117, effective March 16, 1979.

See: 11 N.J.R. 260(a).

As amended, R.1979 d.289, effective August 1, 1979.

See: 11 N.J.R. 258(b), 11 N.J.R. 467(a).

As amended, R.1984 d.87, effective April 2, 1984.

See: 15 N.J.R. 1355(a), 16 N.J.R. 744(a).

(c) Amended to allow interest payments to be credited towards bills.

Amended by R.1988 d.568, effective December 19, 1988.

See: 20 N.J.R. 737(a), 20 N.J.R. 3140(b).

Changed "six months" to "12"; added text "The board shall ...".

Amended by R.1991 d.148, effective May 6, 1991.

See: 22 N.J.R. 619(a), 23 N.J.R. 1450(a).

Requires utilities refund deposit by check or credit and be made within a billing cycle.

Public Notice: Applicable interest rate on customer deposits effective for calendar year 1992 is 6.0 percent.

See: 23 N.J.R. 3660(a).

Amended by R.1992 d.225, effective June 1, 1992.

See: 24 N.J.R. 686(b), 24 N.J.R. 2073(a).

Rounding interest up or down to nearest half percent repealed.

Public Notice: Applicable interest rate on customer deposits effective for calendar year 1993 is 3.93 percent.

See: 24 N.J.R. 4434(a).

Amended by R.1997 d.39, effective February 3, 1997.

See: 28 N.J.R. 1810(a), 29 N.J.R. 449(a).

Deleted (c)1, relating to deposits received on or after Jan. 1, 1989; and recodified former (c)2 through (c)3 as (c)1 through (c)2.

Public Notice: Interest rates on deposits.

See: 33 N.J.R. 136(a).

Public Notice: Interest rates on deposits.

See: 33 N.J.R. 333(a).

Public Notice: Interest rates on deposits.

See: 33 N.J.R. 734(b).

Public Notice: Interest rates on deposits.

See: 33 N.J.R. 4396(a).

#### Cross References

Billing disputes, see N.J.A.C. 14:3-7.13.

#### Case Notes

Utility lost right to setoff security deposit against utility debts. In re Village Craftsman, Inc., Bkrcty.D.N.J.1993, 160 B.R. 740.

### 14:3-7.6 Unmetered service

Where a utility, other than a telephone utility, furnishes unmetered service for which payment is received in advance, it may not demand other guarantees to secure payment for service.

Amended by R.2002 d.280, effective September 16, 2002.

See: 34 N.J.R. 992(a), 34 N.J.R. 3216(b).

Substituted "guarantees" for "guarantee".

### 14:3-7.7 Information for customers

Each utility shall adopt some method of informing its customers as to the reading of meters, either by printing on bills a description of the method of reading meters, or a notice to the effect that the method will be explained on request, giving the address and telephone number where such information may be obtained. In addition the utility shall furnish the address of an office where complaints, service inquiries and bill payments will be received.

### 14:3-7.8 Record of customer's account

Each utility shall keep a record of each customer's account in such a manner as will permit computation of the bill for any billing period occurring within six years, except that telephone utilities shall keep said records in accordance with the Federal Communications Commission's rules and regulations, 47 C.F.R. 42.01 et seq., "Preservation of Records of Communication Common Carriers," as amended and supplemented, incorporated herein by reference.

Amended by R.1997 d.39, effective February 3, 1997.

See: 28 N.J.R. 1810(a), 29 N.J.R. 449(a).

### 14:3-7.9 Form of bill for metered service

(a) Unless a utility has been specifically relieved of so doing by order of the Board, the bill shall show the following:

1. The meter readings at the beginning and end of the billing period;
2. The dates on which the meter is read;
3. The number and kind of units measured;