

Cold Weather Rule to End March 31

The Kansas Cold Weather Rule ends on Sunday, March 31. That means Kansans who are behind on electric and natural gas utility bills will be subject to disconnection of service unless they contact their utility company to make payment arrangements.

The Cold Weather Rule is in effect from November 1 through March 31 each year. It provides protection from disconnection to residential customers served by utilities under the Kansas Corporation Commission's (KCC) jurisdiction. That protection ends on Sunday. Failure to make arrangements or failure to adhere to an already established payment plan could result in service disconnection. Reconnection after March 31 may require payment in full. With the rule ending on a weekend, customers need to make that call to their utility no later than Friday to be eligible for the Cold Weather Rule 12-month payment plan.

The Cold Weather Rule requires regulated utilities to set up 12-month payment plans for customers who cannot afford to pay their full bill. As part of this arrangement, the customer must make an initial payment of 1/12 of the overdue amount, 1/12 of the bill for current service, the full amount of any disconnection or reconnection fees, plus any applicable deposit owed to the utility. The balance is billed in equal payments over the next 11 months in addition to the regular monthly bill.

The KCC adopted the Cold Weather Rule in 1983 to protect customers during cold winter weather by providing a reasonable and organized method of paying past due and current bills. It is important to note that the KCC does not regulate co-ops or municipal utilities, although many of those utilities also offer a cold weather plan. For a complete list of utilities regulated by the KCC visit:

<http://www.kcc.ks.gov/aboutus/jurisdiction>

More information about the Cold Weather Rule is available at:
<http://www.kcc.ks.gov/consumer-information/cold-weather-rule>. Kansans may also contact their local utility company or the KCC's Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Protection at (800) 662-0027.