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## **SOLVING PROBLEMS AND ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT COLORADO UTILITY COMPANIES**

Do you have a problem with a bill or service provided by a regulated electric, gas, telephone or water utility company in Colorado? Or, do you simply have a question about the rules a utility company must follow to provide your service.

The Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) helps utility company customers solve problems or answer questions in three different ways or methods. The PUC calls these methods "informal," "mediation" or "formal." After reading this information, you will be able to choose the method that is best for your needs.

### **THE INFORMAL COMPLAINT METHOD**

You should always first try to get information or solve a billing or service problem with your utility company first. If you're unhappy with the results or have more questions, you may choose to contact the PUC.

1. To begin the informal method, you may either write a letter or send an email to the PUC at the address or website shown at the end of this document, or call one of the telephone numbers listed below. You may also call the PUC to request an appointment to meet with a PUC Consumer Affairs staff person.
2. When you contact the PUC about your problem or question, a staff person will first determine if the PUC regulates the company that provides your service. If not, you will be given advice about other ways you might solve your problem or answer your question.
3. If the PUC regulates your company, a staff person will need to know what you think the utility company has done wrong or has not done for you. Your information might include statements such as:
  - Billing charges are not correct.
  - The utility company is charging me a deposit.
  - The utility company shut off my service.
  - The utility company shut off my service without notice.
  - The utility company didn't repair my service properly.
  - The utility company didn't repair my service on the promised date.

To reach PUC Consumer Affairs:

1560 Broadway, Suite 250, Denver, CO 80202  
303-894-2070 (local); 1-800-456-0858 (toll-free)  
dora\_puc\_complaints@state.co.us

- The utility company won't give me service.
  - The utility company isn't connecting my service on the promised date.
  - My service is poor.
  - The utility company won't let me pay off a past-due bill amount over a period of time.
  - The utility company won't let me change the amount I pay on a past-due bill amount.
4. Upon receipt of your complaint or inquiry, a PUC Consumer Affairs staff person will work with utility company officials to solve your problem. To better assist you, PUC staff will need the following information:
- Your name, address and phone number.
  - Date(s) you contacted the utility company about the problem or question.
  - Name of the utility company staff person who spoke to you or sent you an answer.
  - What you told or asked that person.
  - The utility company's answer.
  - Ways the utility company offered to solve your problem.
  - Copies of utility company bills, notices, letters, etc. that show details of your problem.
  - What you want the utility company to do to solve your problems or answer your question.
5. When the PUC receives a response from the utility company, the staff person assisting you will review the facts and contact you to let you know if the company is following the rules. You will also be asked if you are satisfied with the results. In the meantime, if you receive a direct response from the utility company, please contact the PUC staff person helping you to let them know if you need more help, or if your problems has been solved by the utility company.

Response time varies according to the type of problem or question. The PUC forwards emergency shut-off problems immediately to your utility company. For other matters, the utility company or PUC staff person will reply no later than 14 days after you have mailed your letter, sent your email or called the PUC.

If you are unhappy with the results of your informal complaint, you may be able to use mediation or the formal complaint method listed below. Nothing said or done during the informal process may be used against you or the utility company in the formal complaint process.

## **MEDIATION**

Have you used the PUC informal complaint method with unsatisfactory results? If so, you may be able to use the mediation process to resolve your complaint. Mediation allows both you and the utility company, with the help of a PUC mediator, to negotiate a fair and mutually-agreed upon settlement in an expeditious manner, thereby avoiding the time and expense of a formal complaint hearing.

Both you and the utility company must agree to mediation before a mediator is assigned to your case. Mediation is not binding, and you may choose to pursue the formal complaint process if mediation is unsuccessful.

## **THE FORMAL COMPLAINT METHOD**

If all other methods of resolving your complaint have failed, you may want to ask for a solution in a more formal way. The PUC calls this the formal complaint method.

If the PUC regulates the utility company and the issue that you present, an administrative law judge will conduct a hearing and you will be required to attend. As the complainant, you have the burden of proof. That means that you must prove your case based on evidence and testimony presented the hearing. The result will be a Commission decision that instructs you and the company how to solve the problem.

If you decide to proceed with this formal method, you will need to complete a complaint form using a standard legal document format provided to you by the PUC. You will also need to follow procedures for filing, copying, responding to motions, presenting evidence and witnesses, appealing decisions, etc.

To obtain the formal complaint form and procedures, contact the PUC Consumer Affairs section at the address listed at the bottom of this document. You should plan for several months to pass between the date you file your formal complaint and the date you receive a Commission decision.

### **PUC CONTACT INFORMATION**

Colorado Public Utilities Commission  
Consumer Affairs Section  
1560 Broadway, Suite 250  
Denver, CO 80202

#### Telephone Numbers:

(303) 894-2070	in the Denver metro area
1-800-456-0858	toll-free elsewhere in Colorado
303-894-7880	V/TDD

Consumer Affairs office and telephone hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Consumers may also file an email complaint at the address below:

[Dora\\_puc\\_complaints@state.co.us](mailto:Dora_puc_complaints@state.co.us)

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