

Complaint Filing Process



There are two types of complaints that can be filed with the PUC, an *informal complaint* and a *formal complaint*. The PUC recommends that you use the informal complaint process first, since many issues are resolved sooner through this simpler process.

Filing Informal Complaints

The consumer **MUST** first contact the company to give them an opportunity to resolve the issue before filing an informal complaint. If the issue is not resolved to the consumer's satisfaction, an informal complaint may be filed through the PUC's Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS).

The informal complaint may be filed in the following ways:

By Mail at:



PUC
Bureau of Consumer Services
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

By calling the complaint hotline



Toll free at 1-800-692-7380

By the Internet at:



www.puc.state.pa.us

Once the informal complaint is received, a BCS investigator will work as a mediator between the parties in order to resolve the complaint. This process is much less time consuming than the formal complaint process and usually results in a quicker resolution to the case. Informal complaints against utilities are confidential and not available for public inspection.

Filing Formal Complaints

The formal complaint process is different from the informal because it involves a legal proceeding before a Commission administrative law judge. This means that you and the utility must present facts on issues raised in your complaint to a PUC administrative law judge. However, this should not discourage you from filing a complaint.

Individuals or companies may file formal complaints. Individuals do not need a lawyer to file a formal complaint. However, companies must be represented by an attorney. Complaints are assigned to PUC administrative law judges, who hold hearings to gather evidence and then render decisions. The five PUC commissioners may then rule on the decisions at a public meeting.

Formal complaints must be filed using a "Formal" complaints form. The form can be obtained by calling the complaint hotline toll free at 1-800-692-7380 and request that one be mailed to you or downloaded by selecting Online Forms from the main menu at: www.puc.state.pa.us. The form is set up in Adobe Acrobat, so you can type on the screen to fill out the form and then print it out.

Please review all of the following information on the other side before filing a complaint.

- Have you called the company about this complaint? The Commission may accept complaints only from customers who have first contacted the company about their complaint. We may close your informal complaint without investigation if it is determined that you did not contact your company about this matter before filing an informal complaint.
- Informal complaints must be filed by the customer of record, the person applying for service in their name, or an adult occupant whose name appears on the mortgage, deed or lease of the property for the residential utility service in question. If you are not the customer of record, the applicant for service, or an adult occupant whose name appears on the mortgage, deed or lease of the property for the residential utility service in question, you must state and subsequently verify that you have legal authority to act on behalf of the customer of record or applicant (i.e. power of attorney, legal guardian, etc.)
- If you have a Protection From Abuse (PFA) order, please indicate that on the form or letter when you provide a summary of your problem. After we confirm that you have a PFA order, we will make sure your account receives the special protections entitled under law.
- By filing an informal complaint you are automatically giving permission to the Commission to contact the utility to review the account information concerning your complaint. If you do not want the Commission to have access to your account information, please do not file an informal complaint.
- If your consumer complaint involves money owed to the utility you must pay all current bills (bills for usage each month that you receive after filing an informal complaint) while BCS investigates your complaint. If you do not pay the current bills, the utility may shut off your service for nonpayment of these undisputed charges.
- The Commission is authorized to make payment agreements within limits established by law. The law requires set payback periods based upon income level. The law also limits the number of payment agreements that the Commission may establish on an account by setting conditions that must be met before the Commission may establish more than one agreement.

The law prohibits the Commission from ordering a payment agreement for an outstanding balance resulting from customer assistance program (CAP) rates. Each company has a different name for its CAP. A customer assistance program provides a reduced monthly bill based on household size and income. While the Commission cannot make CAP charges the subject of payment agreements, we can review your account to make sure the company applied its CAP rules correctly; to verify that the CAP balance is accurate; and to make sure CAP is the most beneficial option for your situation.