

New Hampshire

Last updated: 9/10/22

Covered utilities: These policies pertain to electricity customers who receive their service from an investor-owned utility in the State of New Hampshire. Customers that receive service from a municipal utility or an electric cooperative are not covered by these policies.

RSA 362:2; N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1202.18

Weather Protections

Customers may not be disconnected from their utility service from November 15th through March 31st for failure to pay their bills unless their arrearages exceed \$225 for electric non-heating customers, and \$450 for electric heating customers. There are no similar protections that limit disconnections during times of hot weather.

N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1204.02; N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1204.03.

Medical Protections

Disconnections will be delayed for 90 days to 1 year for medical emergencies, where a utility customer or member of the customer's household has a physical or mental health condition that would become a danger to the customer's or household member's physical or mental health in the absence of the utility service, as certified to the utility by a licensed physician, advanced practice registered nurse, physician's assistant, or mental health practitioner. Medical certificates should include information on the use of any life support equipment, and it should specify the amount of time the physician determines utility service is needed. There is no limit on how many times this protection can be renewed.

If a customer does not enter into a payment arrangement or fails to comply with the terms of a payment arrangement, a utility can request permission from the commission to disconnect service. A copy of the request for authorization will be sent to the customer, and the commission will give the customer a chance to respond to the request. The utility shall provide additional information with the request, including, if known, the history of medical emergency certifications on the account, number of children in the household under 5 years old, number of adults over age 65, existence of any financial hardship, and last 12 months of billing and payment information.

Disconnections will not be approved when the customer has made a good faith effort to make payments toward the utility bill. If the commission approves the disconnection, the customer will be given 14-days of notice before termination.

N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1205.02; N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1203.07; RSA 330-A:2; N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1202.11; N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1205.03

Other Customer Protections

There are no specific protections for military personnel.

General Exemptions

Customers and utilities can request an exemption from the rules for reasons of hardship.

N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 201.05

Notification Requirements

Written notification of at least 14 days is required from a utility before a customer may be disconnected. In-person or telephone notifications are required as well. Electric utilities are required to delay a disconnection if it is unable to reach a customer by a telephone call or an in-person visit.

N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1203.11; N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1205.05

Payment Information, Delinquency, and Fee Information

Bills are due 25 days after they are sent out, either electronically or by mail.

A utility shall not disconnect service or send a notice of disconnection if the customer's arrearage is less than 60 calendar days outstanding and is less than \$100. See weather protections for winter period arrearage rules.

Customer may be charged fees associated with a disconnection or a reconnection.

Utilities may provide customers with payment plans.

N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1203.07; N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1202.08; N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1203.11

Landlords and Tenants

Tenants will only receive 10 days of notice before a disconnection may occur.

N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1203.12

Availability of Protection Policies

Utilities and public utility commissions are required to provide information on available sources of financial assistance.

Information on medical protections shall be sent out to customers with their bills no less than 2 times each year. A pamphlet on all consumer protections should be prominently displayed on the utility's website and shall be provided free to any customer requesting a physical copy. Notice that this pamphlet is available on the website and in printed form shall be provided no less than 3 times each year with residential bills. Information on protections shall also be included with disconnection notices.

N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1203.14; N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1203.02; N.H. Code Admin. R. Puc 1203.11