

CHAPTER 19
SERVICE SUPPLIED BY GAS UTILITIES

[Prior to 10/8/86, Commerce Commission [250]]

199—19.1(476) General information.

19.1(1) *Authorization of rules.* Iowa Code chapter 476 provides that the Iowa utilities board shall establish all needful, just and reasonable rules, not inconsistent with law, to govern the exercise of its powers and duties, the practice and procedure before it, and to govern the form, contents and filing of reports, documents and other papers necessary to carry out the provisions of this law.

Iowa Code chapter 479 provides that the Iowa utilities board shall have full authority and power to promulgate rules as it deems proper and expedient in the supervision of the transportation or transmission and underground storage of gas within the state of Iowa.

The application of the rules in this chapter to municipally owned utilities furnishing gas is limited by Iowa Code section 476.1B.

19.1(2) *Application of rules.* The rules shall apply to any gas utility operating within the state of Iowa as defined in Iowa Code chapter 476 and shall supersede any tariff on file with this board which is in conflict with these rules. These rules are intended to promote safe and adequate service to the public, to provide standards for uniform and reasonable practices by utilities, and to establish a basis for determining the reasonableness of such demands as may be made by the public upon the utilities. A request to waive the application of any rule on a permanent or temporary basis may be made in accordance with rule 199—1.3(17A,474,476,78GA,HF2206). The adoption of these rules shall in no way preclude the board from altering or amending them, pursuant to statute, or from making such modifications with respect to their application as may be found necessary to meet exceptional conditions. These regulations shall in no way relieve any utility from any of its duties under the laws of this state.

19.1(3) *Definitions.* The following words and terms, when used in these rules shall have the meaning indicated below:

The abbreviations used, and their meanings, are as follows:

Btu—British thermal unit

LP-Gas—Liquefied Petroleum Gas

psig—Pounds per Square Inch, Gauge

W.C.—Water Column

“*Appliance*” refers to any device which utilizes gas fuel to produce light, heat or power.

“*Board*” means the Iowa utilities board.

“*Complaint*” as used in these rules is a statement or question by anyone, whether a utility customer or not, alleging a wrong, grievance, injury, dissatisfaction, illegal action or procedure, dangerous condition or action, or utility failure to fulfill an obligation.

“*Cubic foot*” of gas has the following meanings:

1. Where gas is supplied and metered to customers at the pressure (as defined in 19.7(2)) normally used for domestic customers’ appliances, a cubic foot of gas shall be that quantity of gas which, at the temperature and pressure existing in the meter, occupies one cubic foot, except that where a temperature compensated meter is used, the temperature base shall be 60°F.

2. When gas is supplied to customers at other than the pressure in (1) above, the utility shall specify in its rules the base for measurement of a cubic foot of gas (see 19.2(4)“c” (6)). Unless otherwise stated by the utility, such cubic foot of gas shall be that quantity of gas which, at a temperature of 60°F and a pressure of 14.73 pounds per square inch absolute, occupies one cubic foot.

3. The standard cubic foot of gas for testing the gas itself for heating value shall be that quantity of gas, saturated with water vapor, which, at a temperature of 60°F and a pressure of 30 inches of mercury, occupies one cubic foot. (Temperature of mercury = 32°F acceleration due to gravity = 32.17 ft. per second per second density = 13.595 grams per cubic centimeter.)

“*Customer*” means any person, firm, association, or corporation, any agency of the federal, state or local government, or legal entity responsible by law for payment for the gas service or heat from the gas utility.

“*Delinquent*” or “*delinquency*” means an account for which a service bill or service payment agreement has not been paid in full on or before the last day for timely payment.

“*Gas*,” unless otherwise specifically designated, means manufactured gas, natural gas, other hydrocarbon gases, or any mixture of gases produced, transmitted, distributed or furnished by any gas utility.

“*Gas plant*” means all facilities including all real estate, fixtures and property owned, controlled, operated or managed by a gas utility for the production, storage, transmission and distribution of gas and heat.

“*Heating and calorific values.*” The following values shall be used:

1. “*British thermal unit*” (Btu) is the quantity of heat that must be added to one avoirdupois pound of pure water to raise its temperature from 58.5°F to 59.5°F under standard pressure.

2. “*Dry calorific value*” of a gas (total or net) is the value of the total or the net calorific value of the gas divided by the volume of dry gas in a standard cubic foot.

NOTE: The amount of dry gas in a standard cubic foot is .9826 cubic foot.

3. “*Net calorific value*” of a gas is the number of British thermal units evolved by the complete combustion, at constant pressure, of one standard cubic foot of gas with air, the temperature of the gas, air, and products of combustion being 60°F and all water formed by the combustion reaction remaining in the vapor state.

NOTE: The net calorific value of a gas is its total calorific value minus the latent heat of evaporation at standard temperature of the water formed by the combustion reaction.

4. “*Therm*” means 100,000 British thermal units.

5. “*Total calorific value*” of a gas is the number of British thermal units evolved by the complete combustion, at constant pressure, of one standard cubic foot of gas with air, the temperature of the gas, air and products of combustion being 60°F and all water formed by the combustion reaction condensed to the liquid state.

“*Interruption of service*” means any disturbance of the gas supply whereby gas service to 50 customers or more in one segment or in a portion of a distribution system cannot be maintained.

“*Loss factor*” as used in rule 19.10(476) means test-year purchases less test-year sales. A five-year average of purchases less sales may be used if the test year is determined by the board to be abnormal.

“*Main*” means a gas pipe, owned, operated, or maintained by a utility, which is used for the purpose of transmission or distribution of gas, but does not include “service line”.

“*Meter*,” without other qualification, shall mean any device or instrument which is used by a utility in measuring a quantity of gas.

“*Meter shop*” is a shop where meters are inspected, repaired and tested, and may be at a fixed location or may be mobile.

“*Pressure*,” unless otherwise stated, is expressed in pounds per square inch above atmospheric pressure, i.e., gauge pressure (abbreviation-*psig*).

“*Rate-regulated utility*” means any utility as defined in the definition of “utility” below which is subject to rate regulation provided for in Iowa Code chapter 476.

“*Service line*” means a distribution line that transports gas from a common source of supply to a customer meter or the connection to a customer’s piping, whichever is farther downstream, or the connection to a customer’s piping if there is not a customer meter. A customer meter is the meter that measures the transfer of gas from a utility to a customer.

“*Tap*” or “*town border station*” means the delivery point or measuring station at which a gas distribution utility receives gas from a natural gas transmission company.

“*Tariff*” means the entire body of rates, tolls, rentals, charges, classifications, rules, procedures, policies, etc., adopted and filed with the board by a gas utility in fulfilling its role of furnishing gas service.

“*Timely payment*” is a payment on a customer’s account made on or before the date shown on a current bill for service or on a form which records an agreement between the customer and a utility for a series of partial payments to settle a delinquent account, as the date which determines application of a late payment charge to the current bill or future collection efforts.

“*Utility*” means any person, partnership, business association, or corporation, domestic or foreign, owning or operating any facilities for furnishing gas or heat to the public for compensation.

199—19.2(476) Records, reports, and tariffs.

19.2(1) *Location and retention of records.* Unless otherwise specified in this chapter, all records required by these rules shall be kept and preserved in accordance with the applicable provisions of Chapter 18 of the board’s rules, Utility Records.

19.2(2) *Tariffs to be filed with the board.* The schedules of rates and rules of rate-regulated gas utilities shall be filed with the board and shall be classified, designated, arranged and submitted so as to conform to the requirements of this chapter. Provisions of the schedules shall be definite and so stated as to minimize ambiguity or the possibility of misinterpretation. The form, identification and content of tariffs shall be in accordance with these rules.

Utilities which are not subject to the rate regulation provided for by Iowa Code chapter 476 shall not be required to file schedules of rates, rules, or contracts primarily concerned with a rate schedule with the board, but nothing contained in these rules shall be deemed to relieve any utility of the requirement of furnishing any of these same schedules or contracts which are needed by the board in the performance of the board’s duties upon request to do so by the board.

19.2(3) *Form and identification.* All tariffs shall conform to the following rules:

a. The tariff shall be printed, typewritten or otherwise reproduced on 8½- × 11- inch sheets of durable white paper so as to result in a clear and permanent record. The sheets of the tariff should be ruled or spaced to set off a border on the left side suitable for binding. In the case of utilities subject to regulation by any federal agency the format of sheets of tariff as filed with the board may be the same format as is required by the federal agency provided that the rules of the board as to title page; identity of superseding, replacing or revision sheets; identity of amending sheets; identity of the filing utility, issuing official, date of issue, effective date; and the words, “Gas Tariff Filed with Board” shall apply in the modification of the federal agency format for the purposes of filing with this board.

b. The title page of every tariff and supplement shall show:

- (1) The first page shall be the title page which shall show:
 - (Name of Public Utility)
 - Gas Tariff
 - Filed with
 - Iowa Utilities Board
 - (date)

(This requirement does not apply to tariffs or amendments filed with the board prior to April 1, 1982.)

(2) When a tariff is to be superseded or replaced in its entirety, the replacing tariff shall show on the upper right corner of its title page that it is a revision of a tariff on file and the number being superseded or replaced, for example:

Tariff No. _____
 Supersedes Tariff No. _____

(This requirement does not apply to tariffs or amendments filed with the board prior to April 1, 1982.)

(3) When a new part of a tariff eliminates an existing part of a tariff it shall so state and clearly identify the part eliminated.

(4) Any tariff modifications as defined in "3" above replacing tariff sheets shall be marked in the right margin with symbols as herein described to indicate the place, nature and extent of the change in text.

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
(C)	A change in regulation
(D)	A discontinued rate, treatment or regulation
(I)	An increased rate or new treatment resulting in increased rate
(N)	A new rate, treatment or regulation
(R)	A reduced rate or new treatment resulting in a reduced rate
(T)	A change in text but no change in rate, treatment or regulation

c. All sheets except the title page shall have, in addition to the above-stated requirements, the following information:

(1) Name of utility under which shall be set forth the words "Filed with Board." If the utility is not a corporation, and a trade name is used, the name of the individual or partners must precede the trade name.

(2) Issuing official and issue date.

(3) Effective date (to be left blank by rate-regulated utilities).

d. All sheets except the title page shall have the following form:

(Company Name)	(Part identification)
Gas Tariff	(This sheet identification)
Filed with board	(Canceled sheet identification, if any)
(Content of tariff)	

Issued: (Date) Effective:

Issued by: (Name, title) (Proposed Effective Date):

The issued date is the date the tariff or the amended sheet content was adopted by the utility.

The effective date will be left blank by rate-regulated utilities and shall be determined by the board. The utility may propose an effective date.

19.2(4) Content of tariffs. A tariff filed with the board shall contain:

a. A table of contents containing a list of rate schedules and other sections in the order in which they appear showing the sheet number of the first page of each section.

b. All rates of utilities subject to rate regulation for service with indication of each rate for the type of gas and the class of customers to which each rate applies. There shall also be shown the prices per unit of service, the number of units per billing period to which the prices apply, the period of billing, the minimum bill, the method of measuring demands and consumptions, including the method of calculating or estimating loads or minimums, delivery pressure, and any special terms or conditions applicable. All rates should be separated into "gas" and "nongas" components, and books and records shall be maintained on this basis. Books and records shall be available to the board for audits upon request. The gas components will be the result of the utility's periodic review of gas procurement practices (rule 19.11(476)) and PGA (rule 19.10(476)) proceeding. The nongas components will be established through rate case proceedings under Iowa Code section 476.3 or 476.6. The period during which the net amount may be paid before the account becomes delinquent shall be specified. In any case where net and gross amounts are billed, the difference between net and gross is a late payment charge and shall be so specified.

Customer charges for all special services relating to providing the basic utility service including, but not limited to, reconnect charge and different categories of service calls shall be specified.

c. A copy of the utility's rules, or terms and conditions, describing the utility's policies and practices in rendering service shall include:

(1) A statement as to the equivalent total heating value of the gas in Btu's per cubic foot on which their customers are billed. If necessary, this may be listed by district, division or community.

(2) The list of the items which the utility furnishes, owns, and maintains on the customer's premises, such as service pipe, meters, regulators, vents and shut-off valves.

(3) General statement indicating the extent to which the utility will provide service in the adjustment of customer appliances at no additional customer charge.

(4) General statement of the utility's policy in making adjustments for wastage of gas when such wastage occurs without the knowledge of the customer.

(5) A statement indicating the minimum number of days allowed for payment after the due date of the customer's bill before service will be discontinued for nonpayment.

(6) A statement indicating the volumetric measurement base to which all sales of gas at other than standard delivery pressure are corrected.

(7) Forms of standard contracts required of customers for the various types of service available.

(8) All tariffs must provide that, notwithstanding any other provision of this tariff or contract with reference thereto, all rates and charges contained in this tariff or contract with reference thereto may be modified at any time by a subsequent filing made pursuant to the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 476.

(9) A copy of each type of customer bill.

(10) Definitions of classes of customer.

(11) Rules for extending service in accordance with 19.3(10).

(12) Rules with which prospective customers must comply as a condition of receiving service, and the terms of contracts required.

(13) Rules governing the establishment and maintenance of credit by customers for payment of service bills.

(14) Rules governing disconnecting and reconnecting service.

(15) Notice required from customer for having service discontinued.

(16) Rules covering temporary, emergency, auxiliary, and stand-by service.

(17) Rules shall show any limitations on loads and cover the type of equipment which may or may not be connected.

(18) Rate-regulated utilities shall include a list of service areas and the applicable rates in such form as to facilitate ready determination of the rates available in each municipality and in such unincorporated communities as have service.

(19) Rules on meter reading, billing periods, bill issuance, timely customer payment, notice of delinquency and service disconnection for nonpayment of bill.

(20) Rules on how a customer or prospective customer should file a complaint with the utility, and how the complaint will be processed.

(21) Rules on how a customer, disconnected customer or potential customer for residential service may negotiate for a payment agreement on amount due, determination of even payment amounts, and time allowed for payments.

(22) If a sliding scale or automatic adjustment is applicable to regulated rates or charges of billed customers, the manner and method of such adjustment calculation shall be covered through a detailed explanation.

19.2(5) *Annual, periodic and other reports to be filed with the board.*

a. System map verification. A utility shall file annually with the board a verification that it has a correct set of utility system maps for each operating or distribution area. The maps shall show:

- (1) Peak shaving facilities location.
- (2) Feeder and distribution mains indicating size and pressure.
- (3) System metering (town border stations and other supply points).
- (4) Regulator stations in system indicating inlet and outlet pressures.
- (5) Calorimeter location.
- (6) State boundary crossing.
- (7) Franchise area.
- (8) Names of all communities (post offices) served.

b. Incident reports. A utility shall notify the utilities board of any event involving release of gas, failure of equipment, or facility operations, which results in any of the following:

- (1) A death or personal injury necessitating in-patient hospitalization.
- (2) Estimated property damage of \$15,000 or more to the property of the utility and to others, including cost of gas lost, if known.
- (3) Emergency shutdown of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility.
- (4) An interruption of service as defined in subrule 19.1(3).
- (5) Any other incident considered significant by the utility.

The utilities board shall be notified by telephone, as soon as is practical, of any reportable incident by calling (515)281-5546. The notification shall include the following information:

1. Name of the utility and of the person making the report and their telephone numbers.
2. The location of the incident.
3. The time of the incident.

4. The number of deaths or personal injuries and the extent of those injuries, if any.
5. Initial estimate of damages.
6. Number of services interrupted, if applicable.
7. A summary of the significant information available to the utility regarding the probable cause of the incident and extent of damages.

Within 30 days of the date of the incident, the utility shall file a written report with the utilities board. The report shall include the information required for telephone notice, the probable cause as determined by the utility, and the amount of monetary damages. If significant additional information becomes available at a later date, a supplemental report shall be filed.

Copies of the report forms and responses to data requests submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation Office of Pipeline Safety or to the National Transportation Safety Board shall be filed with the utilities board.

c. Construction programs. Rescinded IAB 11/19/97, effective 12/24/97.

d. Reports of gas service. Each utility shall compile a monthly record of gas service. The record shall be completed within 30 days after the end of the month covered. The compilation is to be kept available, for inspection by the board or its staff, at the utility's principal office within the state of Iowa. Such record shall contain:

- (1) The daily and monthly average of total heating values of gas in accordance with 19.7(6).
- (2) The monthly acquisition and disposition of gas.
- (3) Interruptions of service occurring during the month in accordance with 19.7(7). If there were no interruptions, then it should be so stated.
- (4) The number of customer pressure investigations made and the results.
- (5) The number of customer meters tested and test results tabulated as follows: The number that falls into limits 0 to + 2%, + 2 to + 4%, 0 to - 2%, - 2 to - 4%, over + 4%, under - 4%, and "Does Not Register" in accuracy.
- (6) Progress on leak survey programs including the number of leaks found classified as to hazard and nature, and if known, the cause and type of pipe involved.
- (7) Number of district regulators checked and nature of repairs required.
- (8) Number of house regulators checked and nature of repairs required.
- (9) Description of any unusual operating difficulties.
- (10) Type of odorant and monthly average pounds per million cubic feet used in each individual distribution system.

A summary of the 12 monthly gas service records for each calendar year shall be attached to and submitted with the utility's annual fiscal plant and statistical report to the board.

e. Filing published meter and service installation rules. A copy of the utility's current rules, if any, published or furnished by the utility for the use of engineers, architects, plumbing contractors, etc., covering meter and service installation shall be filed with the board.

f. Filing customer bill forms. A copy of each type of customer bill form in current use shall be filed with the board.

g. Reports to federal agencies. Copies of reports submitted pursuant to 49 CFR Part 191 as amended through February 1, 2003, "Transportation of Natural and Other Gas by Pipeline; Annual Reports, Incident Reports, and Safety-Related Condition Reports," shall be filed with the board. Utilities operating in states besides Iowa shall provide to the board data for Iowa only.

h. Change in rate. A notification to the board shall be made of any planned change in rate of service by a utility even though the change in rate of service is provided for in its tariff filing with the board. This information shall reflect the amount of increase or decrease and the effective date of application. An up-to-date tariff sheet shall be supplied to the Iowa utilities board for its copy of the tariff showing the current rates.

i. List of persons authorized to receive board inquiries. Each utility shall file with the board a list of names, titles, addresses, and telephone numbers of persons authorized to receive, act upon, and respond to communications from the board in connection with: (1) general management duties; (2) customer relations (complaints); (3) engineering operations; (4) meter tests and repairs; (5) emergencies during nonoffice hours; (6) pipeline permits (gas). Such information shall be kept current as changes or corrections are made.

j. Residential customer statistics. Each rate-regulated gas utility shall file with the board on or before the fifteenth day of each month one copy of the following residential customer statistics for the preceding month:

- (1) Number of accounts;
- (2) Number of accounts certified as eligible for energy assistance since the preceding October 1;
- (3) Number of accounts past due;
- (4) Number of accounts eligible for energy assistance and past due;
- (5) Total revenue owed on accounts past due;
- (6) Total revenue owed on accounts eligible for energy assistance and past due;
- (7) Number of disconnection notices issued;
- (8) Number of disconnection notices issued on accounts eligible for energy assistance;
- (9) Number of disconnections for nonpayment;
- (10) Number of reconnections;
- (11) Number of accounts determined uncollectible; and
- (12) Number of accounts eligible for energy assistance and determined uncollectible.

k. Monthly, periodic and annual reports. Each utility shall file such other monthly, periodic and annual reports as are requested by the board. Monthly and periodic reports shall be due in the board's office within 30 days after the end of the reporting period. All annual reports shall be filed with this board by April 1 of each year for the preceding calendar year.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 476.2.

199—19.3(476) General service requirements.

19.3(1) *Disposition of gas.* The meter and any service line pressure regulator shall be owned by the utility. The utility shall place a visible seal on all meters and service line regulators in customer use, such that the seal must be broken to gain entry.

a. All gas sold by a utility shall be on the basis of meter measurement except:

- (1) Where the consumption of gas may be readily computed without metering; or
- (2) For temporary service installations.

b. The amount of all gas delivered to multioccupancy premises within a single building, where units are separately rented or owned, shall be measured on the basis of individual meter measurement for each unit, except in the following instances:

- (1) Where gas is used in centralized heating, cooling or water-heating systems;
- (2) Where a facility is designated for elderly or handicapped persons;
- (3) Where submetering or resale of service was permitted prior to 1966; or
- (4) Where individual metering is impractical. "Impractical" means: (1) where conditions or structural barriers exist in the multioccupancy building that would make individual meters unsafe or physically impossible to install; (2) where the cost of providing individual metering exceeds the long-term benefits of individual metering; or (3) where the benefits of individual metering (reduced and controlled energy consumption) are more effectively accomplished through a master meter arrangement.

If a multioccupancy building is master-metered, the end-user occupants may be charged for natural gas as an unidentified portion of the rent, condominium fee, or similar payment, or, if some other method of allocating the cost of the gas service is used, the total charge for gas service shall not exceed the total gas bill charged by the utility for the same period.

c. Master metering to multiple buildings is prohibited, except for multiple buildings owned by the same person or entity. Multioccupancy premises within a multiple building complex may be master-metered pursuant to this paragraph only if the requirements of paragraph 19.3(1) "b" have been met.

d. For purposes of this subrule, a "master meter" means a single meter used in determining the amount of natural gas provided to a multioccupancy building or multiple buildings.

e. This rule shall not be construed to prohibit any utility from requiring more extensive individual metering than otherwise required by this rule if pursuant to tariffs filed with and approved by the board.

f. All gas consumed by the utility shall be on the basis of meter measurement except where consumption may be readily computed without metering or where metering is impractical.

19.3(2) Condition of meter. Rescinded IAB 11/12/03, effective 12/17/03. See 199 IAC 19.6(7).

19.3(3) Meter reading records. The meter reading records shall show:

a. Customer's name, address, rate schedule, or identification of rate schedule.

b. Identifying number or description of the meter(s).

c. Meter readings.

d. If the reading has been estimated.

e. Any applicable multiplier or constant, or reference thereto.

19.3(4) Meter charts. All charts taken from recording meters shall be marked with the initial and final date and hour of the record, the meter identification, customer's name and location and the chart multiplier.

19.3(5) Meter register. If it is necessary to apply a multiplier to the meter readings, the multiplier must be marked on the face of the meter register or stenciled in weather resistant paint upon the front cover of the meter. Where remote meter reading is used, whether outdoor on-premises or off-premises-automated, the customers shall have a readable meter register at the meter as a means of verifying the accuracy of bills presented to them.

19.3(6) Prepayment meters. Prepayment meters shall not be geared or set so as to result in the charge of a rate or amount higher than would be paid if a standard type meter were used, except under such special rate schedule as may be filed under 19.2(4).

19.3(7) Meter reading and billing interval. Readings of all meters used for determining charges and billings to customers shall be scheduled at least monthly and for the beginning and termination of service. Bills to larger customers may, for good cause, be rendered weekly or daily for a period not to exceed one month. Intervals other than monthly shall not be applied to smaller customers, or to larger customers after the initial month provided above, without an exemption from the board. A waiver request must include the information required by 199—1.3(17A,474,476,78GA,HF2206). If the board denies a waiver, or if a waiver is not sought with respect to a large volume customer after the initial month, that customer's bill shall be rendered monthly for the next 12 months, unless prior approval is received from the board for a shorter interval. The group of larger customers to which shorter billing intervals may be applied shall be specified in the utility's tariff sheets, but shall not include residential customers.

An effort shall be made to obtain readings of the meters on corresponding days of each meter-reading period. The utility rules may permit the customer to supply the meter readings by telephone or on a form supplied by the utility. The utility may arrange for customer meter reading forms to be delivered to the utility by United States mail, electronically, or by hand delivery. Unless the utility has a plan to test check meter readings, a utility representative shall physically read the meter at least once each 12 months and when the utility is notified there is a change of customer.

The utility may arrange for the meter to be read by electronic means. Unless the utility has a plan to test check electronic meter readings, a utility representative shall physically read the meter at least once every 12 months.

19.3(8) Readings and estimates. When a customer is connected or disconnected or the meter reading date causes a given billing period to deviate by more than 10 percent (counting only business days) from the normal meter reading period, such bill shall be prorated on a daily basis.

When access to meters cannot be gained, the utility may leave with the customer a meter reading form. The customer may provide the meter reading by telephone, electronic mail (if it is allowed by the utility), or by mail. If the meter reading information is not returned in time for the billing operation, an estimated bill may be rendered. If an actual meter reading cannot be obtained, the utility may render an estimated bill without reading the meter or supplying a meter reading form to the customer. Only in unusual cases or when approval is obtained from the customer shall more than three consecutive estimated bills be rendered.

The utility shall incorporate normalized weather data in its calculation of an estimated bill.

Utilities shall file with the board their procedures for calculating estimated bills, including their procedures for determining the reasonable degree-day data to use in the calculations. Utilities shall inform the board when changes are made to the procedures for calculating estimated bills.

19.3(9) Temporary service. When the utility renders a temporary service to a customer it may require that the customer bear all the cost of installing and removing the service in excess of any salvage realized.

19.3(10) Extensions and service line extensions to customers.

a. Definitions. The following definitions shall apply to the terms as used in these rules.

“Advances for construction costs,” as used in these subrules, are cash payments, or surety bonds, or equivalent surety made to the utility by an applicant for an extension, portions of which may be refunded depending on any subsequent connections made to the extension. Cash payments, surety bonds, or equivalent sureties shall include a grossed-up amount for the income tax effect of such revenue.

“Agreed-upon attachment period,” as used in this subrule, means a period of not less than 30 days nor more than one year mutually agreed upon by the utility and the applicant within which the customer will attach. If no time period is mutually agreed upon, the agreed-upon attachment period shall be deemed to be 30 days.

“Contribution in aid of construction,” as used in this subrule, means a nonrefundable cash payment grossed-up for the income tax effect of such revenue covering the costs of an extension that are in excess of utility-funded allowances. The amount of tax shall be reduced by the present value of the tax benefits to be obtained by depreciating the property in determining the tax liability.

“Customer advances for construction records,” as used in this subrule, means a separate record established and maintained by the utility, which includes, by depositor, the amount of advance for construction provided by the customer, whether the advance is by cash or surety bond, or equivalent surety and if by surety bond or equivalent surety, all relevant information concerning the bond or surety, the amount of the refund, if any, to which the depositor is entitled, the amount of refund, if any, which has been made to the customer, the amount unrefunded, and the construction project or work order the extension was installed on.

“Estimated annual revenues,” as used in this subrule, shall be calculated based upon the following factors, including, but not limited to: The size of the facility to be used by the customer, the size and type of equipment to be used by the customer, the average annual amount of service required by the equipment, and the average number of hours per day and days per year the equipment will be in use.

“Estimated base revenues,” as used in this subrule, shall be calculated by subtracting the cost of purchased gas from estimated annual revenues.

“Estimated construction costs,” as used in the subrule, shall be calculated using average costs in accordance with good engineering practices and upon the following factors: Amount of service required or desired by the customer requesting the extension; size, location, and characteristics of the extension, including appurtenances; and whether the ground is frozen or whether other adverse conditions exist. The average cost per foot shall be computed utilizing the prior calendar year costs, to the extent such cost basis does not exceed the current costs using current construction cost methodologies, resources and material, and working conditions, divided by the total feet of extensions by size of pipe for the prior calendar year. In no event shall estimated construction costs include costs associated with facilities built for the convenience of the utility.

“Extension” means a distribution main extension.

“Service line extension,” as used in this subrule, means the piping that extends from the gas main to the meter set riser.

“Similarly situated customer” is a customer whose annual consumption or service requirements, as defined by estimated annual revenue, are similar to other customers with approximately the same annual consumption or service requirements.

“Utility,” as used in the subrule, means a rate-regulated utility.

b. Distribution main extensions.

(1) Plant additions. The utility will provide all gas plant at its cost and expense without requiring an advance for construction from customers or developers except in those unusual circumstances where extensive plant additions are required before the customer can be served, or where the customer will not attach within the agreed-upon attachment period after completion of construction. In such instances, the utility shall require, no more than 30 days prior to commencement of construction, the customer or developer to advance funds which are subject to refund as additional customers are attached. A contract between the utility and the customer, which requires an advance by the customer to make plant additions, shall be available for board inspection. The utility shall allow the customer or developer, at the customer’s or developer’s option, to provide a nonrefundable contribution in aid of construction instead of a refundable advance for construction, under subparagraphs 19.3(10) “b”(2) and (3).

(2) Advances for construction costs for distribution main extensions for customers who will attach within the agreed-upon attachment period. Where the customer will attach within the agreed-upon attachment period after completion of the distribution main extension, the following shall apply:

1. The utility shall finance and make the extension for a customer without requiring an advance for construction if the estimated construction costs to provide a distribution main extension is less than or equal to the three times the estimated base revenue calculated on the basis of similarly situated customers.

2. If the estimated construction cost to provide a distribution main extension is greater than three times the estimated base revenue calculated on the basis of similarly situated customers, the applicant for such an extension shall contract with the utility and deposit an advance for construction equal to the estimated construction cost less three times the estimated base revenue to be produced by the customer no more than 30 days prior to commencement of construction.

(3) Advances for construction costs for distribution main extensions for customers who will not attach within the agreed-upon attachment period. Where the customer will not attach within the agreed-upon attachment period after completion of the distribution main extension, the applicant for the extension shall contract with the utility and deposit no more than 30 days prior to the commencement of construction an advance for construction equal to the estimated construction cost.

Advance payments for plant additions or extensions which are subject to refund for a ten-year period may be made by cash, surety bond, or equivalent surety. In the event a surety bond or an equivalent surety is used, the bonded amount shall have added to it a surcharge equal to the annual interest rate paid by the utility on customer bill deposits times the bonded amount. The bond shall be called by the utility at the end of one year or when the earned refunds are equal to the bonded amount, less the surcharge, whichever occurs first. If, upon termination of the surety bond, there are sufficient earned refunds to offset the amount of the surety bond, less the surcharge, the depositors shall provide the utility the amount of the surcharge. If, upon termination of the surety bond, there are not sufficient earned refunds to offset the full amount of the surety bond, less the surcharge, the depositors shall provide the utility a cash deposit equal to the amount of the surety bond, less refunds accumulated during the bonded period, plus the surcharge, or the depositor may pay the interest on the previous year's bond and rebond the balance due to the utility for a second or third one-year period. Upon receipt of such cash deposit, the utility shall release the surety bond. The cash deposit, less the surcharge, shall be subject to refund by the utility for the remainder of the ten-year period.

(4) Refunds. When the customer has chosen to make an advance for construction rather than a contribution in aid of construction, the utility shall refund to the depositor for a period of ten years from the date of the original advance a pro-rata share for each service attachment to the distribution main extension. The pro-rata refund shall be computed in the following manner:

1. If the combined total of three times estimated base revenue for the depositor and each customer who has attached to the distribution main extension exceeds the total estimated construction cost to provide the extension, the entire amount of the advance provided by the depositor shall be refunded to the depositor.

2. If the combined total of three times estimated base revenue for the depositor and each customer who has attached to the distribution main extension is less than the total estimated construction cost to provide the extension, the amount to be refunded to the depositor shall equal three times estimated base revenue of the customer attaching to the extension.

3. In no event shall the total amount to be refunded to a depositor exceed the amount of the advance for construction made by the depositor. Any amounts subject to refund shall be paid by the utility without interest. At the expiration of the above-described ten-year period, the customer advance for construction record shall be closed and the remaining balance shall be credited to the respective plant account.

c. Service line extensions. The utility shall finance and construct a service line extension without requiring a contribution in aid of construction or any payment by the applicant where the length of the service extension to the riser is up to 50 feet on private property or 100 feet on private property if polyethylene plastic pipe is used.

Where the length of the service extension exceeds 50 feet on private property or 100 feet if polyethylene plastic pipe is used, the applicant shall be required to provide a contribution in aid of construction, within 30 days after completion, for that portion of the service extension on the private property, exclusive of the riser, in excess of 50 feet or in excess of 100 feet if polyethylene plastic pipe is used. The contribution in aid of construction for that portion of the extension shall be computed as follows:

(Estimated Construction Costs) ×

$$\frac{(\text{Total Length in Excess of 50 Feet}) \text{ or } (\text{Total Length in Excess of 100 Feet})}{(\text{Total Length of Service Extension})}$$

d. Extensions not required. Utilities shall not be required to make extensions as described in this rule, unless the extension shall be of a permanent nature.

e. Extensions permitted. This rule shall not be construed as prohibiting any utility from making a contract with a customer in a different manner, if the contract provides a more favorable method of extension to the customer, so long as no discrimination is practiced among customers or depositors.

19.3(11) Cooperation and advance notice. In order that full benefit may be derived from these rules and in order to facilitate their proper application, all utilities shall observe the following cooperative practices:

a. Each utility shall give to other public utilities in the same general territory advance notice of any construction or change in construction or in operating conditions of its facilities concerned or likely to be concerned, in situations of proximity, provided, however, that the requirements of this rule shall not apply in case of routine extensions or minor changes in the local underground distribution facilities.

b. Each utility shall assist in promoting conformity with these rules. An arrangement should be set up between all utilities whose facilities may occupy the same general territory, providing for the interchange of pertinent data and information including that relative to proposed and existing construction and changes in operating conditions concerned or likely to be concerned in situations of proximity.

This rule is intended to implement 42 U.S.C.A. §8372, 10 CFR 516.30, and Iowa Code section 476.8.

199—19.4(476) Customer relations.

19.4(1) Customer information. Each utility shall:

a. Maintain up-to-date maps, plans or records of its entire transmission and distribution systems, with such other information as may be necessary to enable the utility to advise prospective customers, and others entitled to the information, as to the facilities available for serving customers in its service area.

b. Assist the customer or prospective customer in selecting the most economical rate schedule available for the proposed type of service.

c. Notify customers affected by a change in rates or schedule classification in the manner provided in the rules of practice and procedure before the board. (199—7.4(476)IAC)

d. Post a notice in a conspicuous place in each office of the utility where applications for service are received, informing the public that copies of the rate schedules and rules relating to the service of the utility, as filed with the board, are available for public inspection.

e. Upon request, inform its customers as to the method of reading meters.

f. State, on the bill form, that tariff and rate schedule information is available upon request at the utility's local business office.

g. Upon request, transmit a statement of either the customer's actual consumption, or degree day adjusted consumption, at the company's option, of natural gas for each billing period during the prior 12 months.

h. Furnish such additional information as the customer may reasonably request.

i. Inquiries for information or complaints to a utility shall be resolved promptly and courteously. Employees who receive customer telephone calls and office visits shall be qualified and trained in screening and resolving complaints, to avoid a preliminary recitation of the entire complaint to employees without ability and authority to act. The employee shall provide identification to the customer which will enable the customer to reach that employee again if needed.

Each utility shall notify its customers, by bill insert or notice on the bill form, of the address and telephone number where a utility representative qualified to assist in resolving the complaint can be reached. The bill insert or notice shall also include the following statement: "If (utility name) does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Utilities Division, Department of Commerce, 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, (515)281-3839 or toll-free (877)565-4450."

The bill insert or notice for municipal utilities shall include the following statement: "If your complaint is related to service disconnection, safety, or renewable energy, and (utility name) does not resolve your complaint, you may request assistance from the Utilities Division, Department of Commerce, 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, (515)281-3839 or toll-free (877)565-4450."

The bill insert or notice on the bill will be provided no less than annually. Any utility which does not use the standard form contained herein shall file its proposed form in its tariff for approval. A utility which bills by postcard may place an advertisement in a local newspaper of general circulation or a customer newsletter instead of a mailing. The advertisement must be of a type size that is easily legible and conspicuous and must contain the information set forth above.

19.4(2) *Customer deposits.*

a. Each utility may require from any customer or prospective customer a deposit intended to guarantee partial payment of bills for service. Each utility shall allow a person other than the customer to pay the customer's deposit. In lieu of a cash deposit, the utility may accept the written guarantee of a surety or other responsible party as surety for an account. Upon termination of a guarantee contract, or whenever the utility deems the contract insufficient as to amount or surety, a cash deposit or a new or additional guarantee may be required for good cause upon reasonable written notice.

b. A new or additional deposit may be required from a customer when a deposit has been refunded or is found to be inadequate. Written notice shall be mailed advising the customer of any new or additional deposit requirement. The customer shall have no less than 12 days from the date of mailing to comply. The new or additional deposit shall be payable at any of the utility's business offices or local authorized agents. An appropriate receipt shall be provided. No written notice is required to be given of a deposit required as a prerequisite for commencing initial service.

c. No deposit shall be required as a condition for service other than determined by application of either credit rating or deposit calculation criteria, or both, of the filed tariff.

d. The total deposit for any residential or commercial customer for a place which has previously received service shall not be greater than the highest billing of service for one month for the place in the previous 12-month period. The deposit for any residential or commercial customer for a place which has not previously received service or for an industrial customer, shall be the customer's projected one-month usage for the place to be served as determined by the utility, or as may be reasonably required by the utility in cases involving service for short periods or special occasions.

19.4(3) *Interest on customer deposits.* Interest shall be paid by the rate-regulated utility to each customer required to make a deposit. On or after April 21, 1994, rate-regulated utilities shall compute interest on customer deposits at 7.5 percent per annum, compounded annually. Interest for prior periods shall be computed at the rate specified by the rule in effect for the period in question. Interest shall be paid for the period beginning with the date of deposit to the date of refund or to the date that the deposit is applied to the customer's account, or to the date the customer's bill becomes permanently delinquent. The date of refund is that date on which the refund or the notice of deposit refund is forwarded to the customer's last-known address. The date a customer's bill becomes permanently delinquent, relative to an account treated as an uncollectible account, is the most recent date the account became delinquent.

19.4(4) *Customer deposit records.* Each utility shall keep records to show:

- a.* The name and address of each depositor.
- b.* The amount and date of the deposit.
- c.* Each transaction concerning the deposit.

19.4(5) *Customer's receipt for a deposit.* Each utility shall issue a receipt of deposit to each customer from whom a deposit is received, and shall provide means whereby a depositor may establish claim if the receipt is lost.

19.4(6) *Deposit refund.* A deposit shall be refunded after 12 consecutive months of prompt payment (which may be 11 timely payments and one automatic forgiveness of late payment), unless the utility is entitled to require a new or additional deposit. For refund purposes, the account shall be reviewed after 12 months of service following the making of the deposit and for each 12-month interval terminating on the anniversary of the deposit. However, deposits received from customers subject to the exemption provided by subrule 19.3(7), including surety deposits, may be retained by the utility until final billing. Upon termination of service, the deposit plus accumulated interest, less any unpaid utility bill of the customer, shall be reimbursed to the person who made the deposit.

19.4(7) *Unclaimed deposits.* The utility shall make a reasonable effort to return each unclaimed deposit and accrued interest after the termination of the services for which the deposit was made. The utility shall maintain a record of deposit information for at least two years or until such time as the deposit, together with accrued interest, escheats to the state pursuant to Iowa Code section 556.4, at which time the record and deposit, together with accrued interest less any lawful deductions, shall be sent to the state treasurer pursuant to Iowa Code section 556.11.

19.4(8) *Customer bill forms.* Each customer shall be informed as promptly as possible following the reading of the customer's meter, on bill form or otherwise, the following:

- a. The reading of the meter at the beginning and at the end of the period for which the bill is rendered.
- b. The dates on which the meter was read at the beginning and end of the billing period.
- c. The number and kind of units metered.
- d. The applicable rate schedule or identification of the applicable rate schedule.
- e. The account balance brought forward and the amount of each net charge for rate-schedule-priced utility service, sales tax, other taxes, late payment charge, and total amount currently due. In the case of prepayment meters, the amount of money collected shall be shown.
- f. The last date for timely payment shall be clearly shown and shall be not less than 20 days after the bill is rendered.
- g. A distinct marking to identify an estimated bill.
- h. A distinct marking to identify a minimum bill.
- i. Any conversions from meter reading units to billing units, or any calculations to determine billing units from recording or other devices, or any other factors, such as sliding scale or automatic adjustment and amount of sales tax adjustments used in determining the bill.

19.4(9) *Customer billing information alternate.* A utility serving fewer than 5000 gas customers may provide the information in 19.4(8) on bill form or otherwise. If the utility elects not to provide the information of 19.4(8) on the bill form, it shall advise the customer, on the bill form or by bill insert, that such information can be obtained by contacting the utility's local office.

19.4(10) *Payment agreements.*

a. Availability—customer.

(1) When a residential customer cannot pay in full a delinquent bill for utility service and will be disconnected, a utility shall offer the customer an opportunity to enter into a reasonable agreement to pay that bill unless the customer is in default on a payment agreement.

(2) When a disconnected or potential customer for residential service has an outstanding debt to the utility for utility service, cannot pay the debt in full, and is not in default on a payment agreement, the utility must consider a request for a payment agreement.

b. Reasonableness. Whether a payment agreement is reasonable will be determined by considering the current household income, ability to pay, payment history including prior defaults on similar agreements, the size of the bill, the amount of time and the reasons why the bill has been outstanding, and any special circumstances creating extreme hardships within the household. The utility may require the person to confirm financial difficulty with an acknowledgment from the department of human services or another agency.

c. *Terms.* The agreement may require the customer to bring the account to a current status by paying specific amounts at scheduled times. The utility shall offer customers or disconnected customers the option of spreading payments evenly over at least 12 months. Payments for potential customer agreements may be spread evenly over at least 6 months.

The agreement shall also include provision for payment of the current account. The agreement negotiations and periodic payment terms shall comply with tariff provisions which are consistent with these rules.

When the customer makes the agreement in person, a signed copy of the agreement shall be provided to the customer, disconnected customer or potential customer.

The utility may offer the customer the option of making the agreement over the telephone or through electronic transmission. When the customer makes the agreement over the telephone or through electronic transmission, the utility will render to the customer a written document reflecting the terms and conditions of the agreement within three days of the date the parties entered into the oral agreement. The document will be considered rendered to the customer when deposited in the U.S. mail with postage prepaid. If delivery is by other than U.S. mail, the document shall be considered rendered to the customer when delivered to the last-known address of the person responsible for payment for the service. The document shall state that unless the customer notifies the utility within ten days from the date the document is rendered, it will be deemed that the customer accepts the terms as reflected in the written document. The document stating the terms and agreements shall include the address and a toll-free number where a qualified representative can be reached. By making the first payment, the customer confirms acceptance of the terms of the oral agreement.

Second agreement. If a customer has retained service from November 1 through April 1 but is in default of a payment agreement, the utility may offer the customer a second payment agreement that will divide the past-due amount into equal monthly payments with the final payment due by the fifteenth day of the next October. The utility may also require the customer to enter into a level payment plan to pay the current bill.

The customer who has been in default of a payment agreement from November 1 to April 1 may be required to pay current bills based on a budget estimate of the customer's actual usage, weather-normalized, during the prior 12-month period or based on projected usage if historical use data is not available.

d. *Refusal by utility.* If the utility intends to refuse a payment agreement offered by a customer, it must provide a written refusal to the customer. That refusal, with explanation, must be made within 30 days of mailing of the initial disconnection notice. A customer may protest the utility's refusal by filing a written complaint, including a copy of the utility's refusal, with the board within 10 days after receipt of the written refusal. If the utility intends to refuse a payment agreement to a disconnected or potential customer, it must provide a written refusal within 10 days of the application for payment agreement.

19.4(11) Bill payment terms. The bill shall be considered rendered to the customer when deposited in the U.S. mail with postage prepaid. If delivery is by other than U.S. mail, the bill shall be considered rendered when delivered to the last-known address of the party responsible for payment. There shall be not less than 20 days between the rendering of a bill and the date by which the account becomes delinquent. Bills for customers on more frequent billing intervals under subrule 19.3(7) may not be considered delinquent less than 5 days from the date of rendering. However, a late payment charge may not be assessed if payment is received within 20 days of the date the bill is rendered.

The date of delinquency for all residential customers or other customers whose consumption is less than 250 ccf per month shall be changeable for cause in writing; such as, but not limited to, 15 days from approximate date each month upon which income is received by the person responsible for payment. In no case, however, shall the utility be required to delay the date of delinquency more than 30 days beyond the date of preparation of the previous bill.

In any case where net and gross amounts are billed customers, the difference between net and gross is a late payment charge and is valid only when part of a delinquent bill payment. A utility's late payment charge shall not exceed 1.5 percent per month of the past due amount. No collection fee may be levied in addition to this late payment charge. This rule does not prohibit cost-justified charges for disconnection and reconnection of service.

If the customer makes partial payment in a timely manner, and does not designate the service or product for which payment is made, the payment shall be credited pro rata between the bill for utility services and related taxes.

Each account shall be granted not less than one complete forgiveness of a late payment charge each calendar year. The utility's rules shall be definitive that on one monthly bill in each period of eligibility, the utility will accept the net amount of such bill as full payment for such month after expiration of the net payment period. The rules shall state how the customer is notified the eligibility has been used. Complete forgiveness prohibits any effect upon the credit rating of the customer or collection of late payment charge.

All residential customers or other customers whose consumption is less than 250 ccf per month may select a plan of level payments. These rules for such plan shall include at least the following:

- a.* Be offered when the customer initially requests service.
- b.* Have a date of delinquency changeable for cause in writing; such as, but not limited to, 15 days from approximate date each month upon which income is received by the person responsible for payment. The rules may provide that the delinquency date may not be changed to a date later than 30 days after the date of preparation of the previous bill.
- c.* Provide for entry into the level payment plan anytime during the calendar year. The month of entry shall be that customer's anniversary month.
- d.* The billing period level payment to be the sum of estimated charges divided by the number of standard billing intervals, all for the next 12 consecutive months.
- e.* A customer may request termination of the plan (or withdrawal from the plan) at any time. If the customer's account is in arrears, the customer may be required to bring the account to a current balance before termination or withdrawal. If there is a credit balance, the customer shall be allowed the option of obtaining a refund or applying the credit to charges for subsequent months' service.
- f.* The level payment plan account balance on the anniversary date shall be carried forward and added to the estimated charges for service during the next year, and this total will be the basis for computing the next year's periodic billing interval level payment amount. The customer shall be given the option of applying any credit to payments of subsequent months' level payment amounts due or obtaining a refund of any credit in excess of \$10. For purposes of this paragraph the anniversary date account balance shall not carry forward on unpaid level payment bill. For delinquency on a level payment plan amount see 19.4(11) "i."
- g.* The amount to be paid in each billing interval by a customer on a level payment plan shall be computed at the time of entry into the plan. It may be recomputed on each anniversary date, when requested by the customer or whenever price, consumption, alone or in combination result in a new estimate differing by 10 percent or more from that in use.

When a customer's payment level is recomputed, the customer shall be notified of the revised payment amount and the reason for the change. The notice shall be served not less than 30 days prior to the date of delinquency for the first revised payment. The notice may accompany the bill prior to the bill affected by the revised payment amount.

h. The account shall be balanced upon termination of service or withdrawal in accord with the tariff.

i. Irrespective of the account balance, a delinquency in payment shall be subject to the same procedures as other accounts on late payment charge on the level payment amount. If the account balance is a debit, a delinquency in payment shall be subject to the same procedures as other accounts for collection or cut-off. If the account balance is a credit, the level payment plan shall terminate after not less than 30 days nor more than 60 days of delinquency.

19.4(12) Customer records. The utility shall retain customer billing records for the length of time necessary to permit the utility to comply with 19.4(13) but not less than three years.

19.4(13) Adjustment of bills. Bills which are incorrect due to billing errors or faulty metering installation are to be adjusted as follows:

a. Fast metering. Whenever a metering installation is tested and found to have overregistered more than 2 percent, the utility shall recalculate the bills for service.

(1) The bills for service shall be recalculated from the time at which the error first developed or occurred if that time can be definitely determined.

(2) If the time at which the error first developed or occurred cannot be definitely determined, it shall be assumed that the overregistration has existed for the shortest time period calculated as one-half the time since the meter was installed or one-half the time elapsed since the last meter test unless otherwise ordered by the board.

(3) If the recalculated bills indicate that \$5 or more is due an existing customer or \$10 or more is due a person no longer a customer of the utility, the tariff shall provide for refunding of the full amount of the calculated difference between the amount paid and the recalculated amount. Refunds shall be made to the two most recent customers who received service through the metering installation during the time the error existed. In the case of a previous customer who is no longer a customer of the utility, a notice of the amount subject to refund shall be mailed to such previous customer at the last-known address, and the utility shall, upon demand made within three months thereafter, refund the same.

Refunds shall be completed within six months following the date of the metering installation test.

b. Slow metering. Whenever a meter is found to be more than 2 percent slow, the tariff may provide for back billing the customer for the amount the test indicates has been undercharged for the period of inaccuracy.

When the average error cannot be determined by test because of failure of part or all of the metering equipment, the tariff may provide for use of the registration of check metering installation, if any, or for estimating the quantity consumed based on available data. The customer must be advised of the failure and of the basis for the estimate of quantity billed.

(1) The utility may not back bill due to underregistration unless a minimum back bill amount is specified in its tariff. The minimum amount specified for back billing shall not be less than, but may be greater than, \$5 for an existing customer or \$10 for a former customer. All recalculations resulting in an amount due equal or greater than the tariff specified minimum shall result in issuance of a back bill.

(2) The period for back billing shall not exceed the last six months the meter was in service unless otherwise ordered by the board.

(3) Back billings shall be rendered no later than six months following the date of the metering installation test.

c. Billing adjustments due to fast or slow meters shall be calculated on the basis that the meter should be 100 percent accurate. For the purpose of billing adjustment the meter error shall be one-half of the algebraic sum of the error at full-rated flow plus the error at check flow.

d. When a customer has been overcharged as a result of incorrect reading of the meter, incorrect application of the rate schedule, incorrect connection of the meter, or other similar reasons, the amount of the overcharge shall be adjusted, refunded, or credited to the customer. The time period for which the utility is required to adjust, refund, or credit the customer's bill shall not exceed five years unless otherwise ordered by the board.

e. When a customer has been undercharged as a result of incorrect reading of the meter, incorrect application of the rate schedule, incorrect connection of the meter, or other similar reasons, the amount of the undercharge may be billed to the customer. The time period for which the utility may adjust for the undercharge shall not exceed five years unless otherwise ordered by the board. The maximum back bill shall not exceed the billing for like charges (e.g., usage-based, fixed or service charges) in the 12 months preceding discovery of the error unless otherwise ordered by the board.

19.4(14) Credits and explanations. Credits due a customer because of meter inaccuracies, errors in billing, or misapplication of rates shall be separately identified.

19.4(15) Refusal or disconnection of service. Notice of a pending disconnection shall be rendered and gas service refused or disconnected as set forth in the tariff.

The notice of pending disconnection required by these rules shall be a written notice setting forth the reason for the notice, and final date by which the account is to be settled or specific action taken. The notice shall be considered rendered to the customer when deposited in the U.S. mail with postage pre-paid. If delivery is by other than U.S. mail, the notice shall be considered rendered when delivered to the last-known address of the person responsible for payment for the service. The date for refusal or disconnection of service shall be not less than 12 days after the notice is rendered. The date for refusal or disconnection of service for customers on shorter billing intervals under subrule 19.3(7) shall not be less than 24 hours after the notice is posted at the service premises.

One written notice, including all reasons for the notice, shall be given where more than one cause exists for refusal or disconnection of service. The notice shall also state the final date by which the account is to be settled or other specific action taken. In determining the final date, the days of notice for the causes shall be concurrent.

Service may be refused or disconnected for any of the reasons listed below. Unless otherwise stated, the customer shall be provided notice of the pending disconnection and the rule violation which necessitates disconnection. Furthermore, unless otherwise stated, the customer shall be allowed a reasonable time in which to comply with the rule before service is disconnected. Except as provided in 19.4(15) "a," "b," "c," and "d," no service shall be disconnected on the day preceding or day on which the utility's local business office or local authorized agent is closed. Service may be refused or disconnected:

- a. Without notice in the event of a condition determined by the utility to be hazardous.
- b. Without notice in the event of customer use of equipment in a manner which adversely affects the utility's equipment or the utility's service to others.
- c. Without notice in the event of tampering with the equipment furnished and owned by the utility. For the purposes of this subrule, a broken or absent meter seal alone shall not constitute tampering.
- d. Without notice in the event of unauthorized use.
- e. For violation of or noncompliance with the utility's rules on file with the utilities division.
- f. For failure of the customer or prospective customer to furnish the service equipment, permits, certificates or rights of way which are specified to be furnished, in the utility's rules filed with the utilities division, as conditions of obtaining service, or for the withdrawal of that same equipment or for the termination of those same permissions or rights, or for the failure of the customer or prospective customer to fulfill the contractual obligations imposed as conditions of obtaining service by any contract filed with and subject to the regulatory authority of the utilities board.
- g. For failure of the customer to permit the utility reasonable access to its equipment.
- h. For nonpayment of bill or deposit, except as restricted by 19.4(16) and 19.4(17), provided that the utility has:
 - (1) Made a reasonable attempt to effect collection;
 - (2) Given the customer, and any other person or agency designated by the customer, written notice that the customer has at least 12 days in which to make settlement of the account, together with a written summary of the rights and remedies available to avoid disconnection. Customers billed more frequently than monthly pursuant to subrule 19.3(7) shall be given posted written notice that they have 24 hours to make settlement of the account, together with a written summary of the rights and remedies available to avoid disconnection. All written notices shall include a toll-free or collect telephone number where a utility representative qualified to provide additional information about the disconnection can be reached. Each utility representative must provide their name to the caller, and have immediate access to current, detailed information concerning the customer's account and previous contacts with the utility.

(3) The summary of the rights and remedies must be approved by the board. Any utility providing gas service and defined as a public utility in Iowa Code section 476.1 which does not use the standard form set forth below for customers billed monthly shall submit to the board an original and six copies of its proposed form for approval. A utility billing a combination customer for both gas and electric service may modify the standard form to replace each use of the word “gas” with the words “gas and electricity” in all instances.

AVOIDING SHUT OFF OF GAS SERVICE FOR NONPAYMENT

1. What can I do if I receive a notice from the utility that says my gas will be shut off because I have a past due bill?

- a. Pay the bill in full; or
- b. Enter into a reasonable payment plan with the utility (see #2 below); or
- c. Apply for and become eligible for low-income energy assistance (see #3 below); or
- d. Give the utility a written statement from a doctor or public health official stating that shutting off your gas would pose an especial health danger for a person living at the residence (see #4 below); or
- e. Tell the utility if you think part of the amount shown on the bill is wrong. However, you must still pay the part of the bill you agree you owe the utility (see #5 below).

2. How do I go about making a reasonable payment plan? (Residential customers only)

- a. Contact the utility as soon as you know you cannot pay the amount you owe. If you cannot pay all the money you owe at one time, the utility may offer you a payment plan that spreads payments evenly over at least 12 months. The plan may be longer depending on your financial situation.
- b. If you have not made the payments you promised in a previous payment plan with the utility and still owe money, the utility can refuse to offer you another payment plan.
- c. If you do not make the payments you promise, the utility may shut off your utility service on one day’s notice unless all the money you owe the utility is paid. If your utility service is shut off, the utility may refuse to offer you any further payment plans.

3. How do I apply for low-income energy assistance? (Residential customers only)

- a. Contact the local community action agency in your area (see attached list); or
- b. Contact the Division of Community Action Agencies at the Iowa Department of Human Rights, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319; telephone (515)281-0859. To prevent disconnection, the utility must be contacted prior to disconnection of your service.
- c. To avoid disconnection, you must apply for energy assistance before your service is shut off. Notify your utility that you may be eligible and have applied for energy assistance. Once your service has been disconnected, it will not be reconnected based on approval for energy assistance.

4. What if someone living at the residence has a serious health condition? (Residential customers only)

Contact the utility if you believe this is the case. Contact your doctor or a public health official and ask the doctor or health official to contact the utility and state that shutting off your utility service would pose an especial health danger for a person living at your residence. The doctor or public health official must provide a written statement to the utility office within 5 days of when your doctor or public health official notifies the utility of the health condition; otherwise, your utility service may be shut off. If the utility receives this written statement, your service will not be shut off for 30 days. This 30-day delay is to allow you time to arrange payment of your utility bill or find other living arrangements. After 30 days, your service may be shut off if payment arrangements have not been made.

5. What should I do if I believe my bill is not correct?

You may dispute your utility bill. You must tell the utility that you dispute the bill. You must pay the part of the bill you think is correct. If you do this, the utility will not shut off your service for 45 days from the date the bill was mailed while you and the utility work out the dispute over the part of the bill you think is incorrect. You may ask the Iowa Utilities Board for assistance in resolving the dispute. (See #9 below.)

6. When can the utility shut off my utility service because I have not paid my bill?

- a. Your utility can shut off service between the hours of 6 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- b. The utility will not shut off your service on nights, weekends, or holidays for nonpayment of a bill.
- c. The utility will not shut off your service if you enter into a reasonable payment plan to pay the overdue amount (see #2 above).
- d. The utility will not shut off your service if the temperature is forecasted to be colder than 20 degrees Fahrenheit during the following 24-hour period, including the day your service is scheduled to be shut off.
- e. If you have qualified for low-income energy assistance, the utility cannot shut off your service between November 1 and April 1. However, you will still owe the utility for the service used during this time.
- f. The utility will not shut off your service if you have notified the utility that you dispute a portion of your bill and you pay the part of the bill that you agree is correct.

7. How will I be told the utility is going to shut off my gas?

- a. You must be given a written notice at least 12 days before the utility service can be shut off for nonpayment. This notice will include the reason for shutting off your service.
- b. If you have not made payments required by an agreed-upon payment plan, your service may be disconnected with only one day's notice.
- c. The utility must also try to reach you by telephone or in person before it shuts off your service. Between November 1 and April 1, if the utility cannot reach you by telephone or in person, the utility will put a written notice on the door of your residence to tell you that your utility service will be shut off.

8. If service is shut off, when will it be turned back on?

- a. The utility will turn your service back on if you pay the whole amount you owe or agree to a reasonable payment plan (see #2 above).
- b. If you make your payment during regular business hours, or by 7 p.m. for utilities permitting such payment or other arrangements after regular business hours, the utility must make a reasonable effort to turn your service back on that day. If service cannot reasonably be turned on that same day, the utility must do it by 11 a.m. the next day.
- c. The utility may charge you a fee to turn your service back on. Those fees may be higher in the evening or on weekends, so you may ask that your service be turned on during normal utility business hours.

9. Is there any other help available besides my utility?

If the utility has not been able to help you with your problem, you may contact the Iowa Utilities Board toll-free at 1-877-565-4450. You may also write the Iowa Utilities Board at 350 Maple Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0069, or by E-mail at iubcustomer@iub.state.ia.us. Low-income customers may also be eligible for free legal assistance from Iowa Legal Aid, and may contact Legal Aid at 1-800-532-1275.

(4) When disconnecting service to a residence, made a diligent attempt to contact, by telephone or in person, the customer responsible for payment for service to the residence to inform the customer of the pending disconnection and their rights and remedies; if an attempt at personal or telephone contact of a customer occupying a unit which a utility knows or should know is a rental unit has been unsuccessful, the landlord of the rental unit, if known, shall be contacted to determine if the customer is still in occupancy and, if so, their present location. The landlord shall also be informed of the date when service may be disconnected.

During the period November 1 to April 1, if the attempt at customer contact fails, the premises must be posted with a notice informing the customer of the pending disconnection, and rights or remedies available to avoid disconnection, at least one day prior to disconnection; if the disconnection will affect occupants of residential units leased from the customer, the premises of any building known by the utility to contain residential units affected by disconnection must be posted, at least two days prior to disconnection, with a notice informing any occupants of the date when service will be disconnected and the reasons therefor.

(5) Given the customer a reasonable opportunity to dispute the reason for the disconnection and, if to the extent applicable, complied with each of the following:

Disputed bill. In the event there is a dispute concerning a bill for natural gas service, the utility may require the customer to pay a sum of money equal to the amount of the undisputed portion of the bill pending settlement and thereby avoid discontinuance of service for nonpayment of the disputed bill for up to 45 days after the rendering of the bill. The 45 days shall be extended by up to 60 days if requested of the utility by the board in the event customer files a written complaint with the board.

Special circumstances. Disconnection of a residential customer may take place only between the hours of 6 a.m. and 2 p.m. on a weekday and not on weekends or holidays. If a disconnected customer makes payment or other arrangements during normal business hours, or by 7 p.m. for utilities permitting such payment or other arrangements after normal business hours, all reasonable efforts shall be made to reconnect the customer that day. If a disconnected customer makes payment or other arrangements after 7 p.m., all reasonable efforts shall be made to reconnect the customer not later than 11 a.m. the next day. A disconnection may not take place where gas is used as the only source of space heating or to control or operate the only space heating equipment at the residence, on any day when the National Weather Service forecast for the following 24 hours covering the area in which the residence is located includes a forecast that the temperature will go below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. In any case where the utility has posted a disconnect notice in compliance with 19.4(15)“h”(4) but is precluded from disconnecting service because of a National Weather Service forecast, the utility may immediately proceed with appropriate disconnection procedures, without further notice, when the temperature in the area where the residence is located rises to above 20 degrees, unless the customer has paid in full the past due amount or is entitled to postponement of disconnection under some other provision of this rule.

Health of a resident. Disconnection of a residential customer shall be postponed if the discontinuance of service would present an especial danger to the health of any permanent resident of the premises. An especial danger to health is indicated if one appears to be seriously impaired and may, because of mental or physical problems, be unable to manage their own resources, carry out activities of daily living or protect oneself from neglect or hazardous situations without assistance from others. Indicators of an especial danger to health include but are not limited to: age, infirmity, or mental incapacitation; serious illness; physical disability, including blindness and limited mobility; and any other factual circumstances which indicate a severe or hazardous health situation. The utility may require written verification of the especial danger to health by a physician or a public health official, including the name of the person endangered, a statement that the person is a resident of the premises in question, the name, business address, and telephone number of the certifying party, the nature of the health danger and approximately how long the danger will continue. Initial verification by the verifying party may be by telephone if written verification is forwarded to the utility within five days.

Verification shall postpone disconnection for 30 days; however, the postponement may be extended by a renewal of the verification. In the event service is terminated within 14 days prior to verification of illness by or for a qualifying resident, service shall be restored to that residence if a proper verification is thereafter made in accordance with the foregoing provisions. The customer must enter into a reasonable agreement for the retirement of the unpaid balance of the account within the first 30 days and keep the current account paid during the period that the unpaid balance is to be retired.

Reasonable payment agreement. If financial difficulty of a residential customer is confirmed, disconnection may not take place until after the utility has offered the customer an opportunity to enter into a reasonable payment agreement as required by 19.4(10). Disconnection shall be delayed 30 days for the making of a reasonable payment agreement and the 30 days shall be extended to 60 days if requested of the utility by the board upon receipt of a complaint that the utility has arbitrarily refused a payment agreement offered by the customer and upon a finding the customer has made payment as provided for in the offered agreement.

Winter energy assistance (November 1 through April 1). If the utility is informed that the customer's household may qualify for winter energy assistance or weatherization funds, there shall be no disconnection of service for 30 days from the date of application to allow the customer time to obtain assistance. Disconnection shall not take place from November 1 through April 1 for a resident who is a head of household and who has been certified to the public utility by the community action agency as eligible for either the low-income home energy assistance program or weatherization assistance program. In addition to the notification procedure required herein, the utility shall, prior to November 1, mail customers a notice describing the availability of winter energy assistance funds and the application process. The notice must be of a type size that is easily legible and conspicuous and must contain the information set out by the state agency administering the assistance programs. A utility serving fewer than 6,000 customers may publish notice in an advertisement in a local newspaper of general circulation or shopper's guide. A utility serving fewer than 25,000 customers may publish the notice in a customer newsletter in lieu of mailing.