
FISCAL UPDATE Article

Fiscal Services Division

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IOWA UTILITIES BOARD — COVID-19 RESPONSE

Utility Shutoff Order. Following the Governor's proclamation of a public health emergency on March 9, 2020, the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) issued an emergency order directing all electric and natural gas utilities in the State to cease disconnection of residential service due to nonpayment.

On March 19, 2020, the IUB urged all utilities to refrain from utility service shutoffs, especially water service due to public health directives to engage in frequent handwashing to slow the spread of COVID-19 infections. The Board also expressed support for the Iowa Department of Human Rights [action](#) to extend Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) applications to May 31, 2020, instead of April 1, 2020. LIHEAP assists low-income families with meeting costs of home heating through a one-time payment made directly to the utility or heating fuel vendor. Additionally, Iowa Code section [476.20](#) specifies that qualified applicants who are identified as the head of a household are exempt from gas or electric service disconnections during this period. Although individuals meeting LIHEAP qualifications cannot be disconnected during the moratorium, the IUB has [urged](#) customers to continue to pay toward energy bills to mitigate debt accumulation and potential utility service disconnection when the moratorium ends.

On March 27, 2020, the IUB issued an emergency order regarding the disconnection of electric, natural gas, and water utilities during the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency. The statewide extension period established by the IUB order applies to all investor-owned, municipal, and cooperative utilities in Iowa.

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