

## Office of People's Counsel

### Weather Restrictions on Utility Service Terminations

**There is no such thing as a winter moratorium on utility service terminations in MD.**

#### **Winter Protections in place November 1-March 31**

- 1) Service shut-offs are prohibited on any day with a forecast at 6AM of 32 degrees or below, during the next 72-hour period. **The weather restriction is short-term.**
- 2) The utility cannot terminate service for:
  - A gas OR electric bill of \$200 or less
  - A combined gas AND electric bill of \$300 or less

#### **If the utility wants to disconnect a customer between November 1 and March 31**

- 1) The utility must file an affidavit with the Public Service Commission (PSC). They filing must:
  - a. Be at least 24 hours before shut-off;
  - b. Certify that shut-off **will not pose a threat to life or health** of occupants;
  - c. State whether a customer claims an occupant is an older adult, has a disability, is seriously ill or dependent upon life support equipment.
- 2) The utility must attempt personal contact **on two separate days** and provide information on energy programs either by telephone or by visiting the account holder.

#### **General Protections**

A utility cannot terminate service if it has reason to believe that termination would endanger the health or life of an occupant of the customer's residence.

- 1) Medical: The termination must "aggravate" a serious illness or prevent the use of life support equipment.
  - 2) Older Adults: 65 or older.
  - 3) Person with a disability: (1) Person has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more life activities, and (2) (a) receives disability payments or (b) has a certificate for a physical disability or a mental impairment.
- **You must provide the utility a PSC Medical Certification form filled out by a licensed physician, physician's assistant, or certified nurse practitioner before the termination of service.**
  - **You must enter into a payment arrangement with the utility.**

**See OPC's COVID-19 Resources for Help with Past-Due Bills**