

2018-2019 HEATING SEASONS

# CUSTOMER INFORMATION HANDBOOK



## EASTERN NATURAL GAS

4100 HOLIDAY STREET NW  
SUITE 201  
CANTON, OHIO 44718

*Natural Gas - America's Clean  
Energy Source*

**Requirements of Company Personnel on Customer Premises**

Any gas or natural gas company employee or agent seeking access to the customer's or landlord's premises shall, upon request, identify himself/herself, provide company photo identification and state the reason for the visit.

**Privacy Rights**

The Company shall only disclose a customer's account number with the customer's written consent for gas or natural gas company credit evaluation, collection and/or credit reporting or pursuant to court order or subpoena.

It shall only disclose a customer's social security number with the customer's written consent for gas or natural gas company credit evaluation, collections, and/or credit reporting or as ordered by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, other governmental agency, or pursuant to court order or subpoena.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE LINES

### OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The general term "Service Line" is commonly used to designate the complete connection and line from the Company's distribution main up to and including the meter connection. It consists of two distinct parts, (a.) the Distribution Main Service Line Connection, and (b.) the Customer Service Line.

(a.) Distribution Main Service Line Connection.

The distribution main service line connection consists of the connection (tap) at the main, necessary pipe and appurtenances to extend to the customer's property line or the curb cock location curb cock (shut-off valve) and curb box. There is a Tap Fee paid prior to being connected to our system. Please call our office for details. This connection shall be installed by the Company or its representative. The Company will furnish each customer with a meter and regulator of such size and type as the Company may determine which will adequately service the customer's requirements. The meter, regulator and connection, shall be the property of the Company and will be maintained by the Company. The Company shall have control of, and access to, said meter at all times and shall have the right to replace the meter at its expense, as the Company may deem necessary.

(b.) Customer Service Line

The customer service line consists of the portion of pipe from the outlet of the curb valve to the inlet of the meter, including the meter connection. The customer service line shall be installed, maintained, repaired or replaced at the customer's expense and it shall be and remain the property of the customer. For the installation of the initial customer service line, or in the event that the line is required to be repaired or replaced, the customer shall be responsible for the cost and shall have the option of having the Company or other independent contractor (who is operator qualified) perform the installation, repair or replacement of the line. The Company shall have the right to prescribe the size, kind, location, depth and termination points of the customer service line. The customer service line shall be installed, repaired or replaced with materials and workmanship which meet the reasonable requirements of the Company and shall be subject to inspection and testing by the Company.

It is important to the Company that its customers recognize the necessity of maintaining the safe operation of customer service lines. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio requires the Company to provide information to its customers as to the proper care and maintenance of customer service lines. Customers needing information on this matter should contact the Company's local service office for assistance.

### NATURAL GAS SAFETY TIPS

Even with a system as safe and secure as a natural gas system, leaks can sometimes occur. The following signs are ways of recognizing a potential gas leak.

- ❖ Detection of a special scent added to the otherwise odorless natural gas.
- ❖ Brown patches in vegetation on or near a gas line.
- ❖ A blowing or hissing sound or dirt blowing into the air.
- ❖ Water bubbling in a puddle, creek, or river.

Be aware that gas has been known to leak into buildings by following other utility lines and underground structures. If you detect the odor of gas or suspect a gas leak:

- ❖ In case of leaking gas in a building, evacuate immediately, call 911, and contact our company.
- ❖ Do not use matches or operate electrical switches or equipment.
- ❖ Do not run vehicle engines near leaking gas.

Promptly contact our Company if while digging, you strike our pipeline facilities that result in blowing gas, a fire, or explosion:

- ❖ Leave the area immediately and call **911**. Warn others to stay away

## CUSTOMER RESPONSIBILITY

### WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The customer is responsible for the maintenance of all gas piping from the gas meter to all appliances

Buried gas piping which is not maintained may be subject to the potential hazards of corrosion and leakage.

For your safety, all buried piping should be periodically inspected for leaks. If the buried piping is metallic, it should also be periodically inspected for corrosion.

If an unsafe condition is found, the gas piping will need to be promptly repaired.

When digging near buried gas piping, the piping should be located in advance of digging.

### TO OBTAIN HELP

Plumbers and heating contractors can assist in locating, inspecting, and repairing customer's buried piping if they are operator qualified.

- ❖ Contact our company and local fire/police (911)
- ❖ Do not try to extinguish a gas fire or operate any pipeline valves.

If you gouge, dent, or damage the protective coating on our pipeline please contact our Company to perform the necessary repairs.

### SMELL OF GAS

For your safety, we have included a pamphlet containing a sample of the odor of natural gas. Please take the time to familiarize yourself and your family with this odor and the procedures you should follow if you detect it in or around your home. Your safety is our concern and checking for a suspected leak is a free service that is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Please keep our telephone numbers available in case of an emergency.

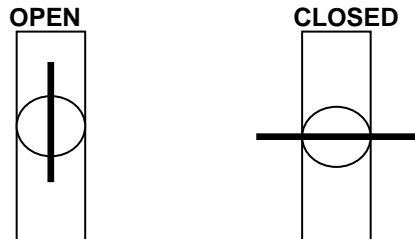
### PIPELINE PURPOSE AND RELIABILITY

Eastern Natural Gas provides safe and efficient natural gas service through a series of underground pipelines within its service area. The company on a regular basis patrols its pipelines checking for leaks to insure your safety.

### GAS VALVE

In addition to reading the enclosed pamphlet, you should, as a safety precaution, familiarize yourself with where to go and what to do to turn off your gas service. First locate the gas shut-off valve near your meter. Then refer to the diagram below for directions to turn it off.

#### Gas Valve Positions



Valves require only a quarter of a turn to stop the gas flow. The valves are tight to avoid accidental movement; therefore, you may need a wrench to close yours. Call the gas company to turn your gas back on.

### CARBON MONOXIDE SAFETY

Carbon monoxide is a highly toxic, non-irritating, odorless, colorless gas that is the result of poorly operating, or improperly vented sources of combustion. Furnaces, gas stoves, space heaters, fireplaces, automotive exhaust, and even barbecue grills are all potential sources of the poisonous gas.

The harmful effects of carbon monoxide poisoning depend on the concentration of the gas in the air, exposure times, and factors such as age, health, size and sex. Symptoms include headache, nausea, chronic fatigue, confusion, and dizziness. Extreme exposure can even cause a coma or death.

What can you do?

Make sure your fuel burning appliances are properly vented and operating correctly.

Check your chimneys and flues for sufficient draft.

Allow extra room ventilation when using space heaters, performing extra cooking or as common sense dictates.

Carbon monoxide detectors meeting the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) standards are becoming increasingly popular for home safety.

If you suspect the presence of carbon monoxide, contact the appropriate emergency personnel or have your home inspected by a qualified heating and cooling contractor.

### APPLIANCE SAFETY

The Company recommends that the customer familiarize themselves with the safe operations of natural gas appliances. Each of your appliances has a general instruction manual related to the operational safety of the appliance. **Follow the Manufacturer's Recommendations** for the safe operation of these appliances.

### EXCESS FLOW VALVES

Excess flow valves that meet new federal government standards are installed by your Gas Company for new installations or replacements of single residential gas service lines which operate continuously at or above 10 psig.

An excess flow valve is a device designed to automatically shut off or greatly reduce the flow of natural gas if the gas service line breaks. Potential safety benefits may be derived from installing an excess flow valve, such as, less chance of personal injuries or property damage resulting from excavation-related accidents. An excess flow valve does not protect against slow leaks resulting from corrosion or threaded joints or any leaks that might develop beyond meter assembly.

Excess flow valve installation is mandatory on gas lines operating at 10 psi or above. Your Gas Company currently installs excess flow valves on all new service line installations that meet the above requirements.

To obtain additional information, contact:

Ohio Consumers' Counsel	877-742-5622
Public Utility Commission of Ohio	800-686-7826
TTY-TDD users call	711

## **METER INFORMATION**

### **METER ACCURACY**

All meters are tested in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Public Utilities Commission before they go into service. Periodic replacement is also in accordance with the terms of an approved Public Utilities Commission Plan. Upon replacement, our serviceman will re-light your appliances.

The Public Utilities Commission rules and regulations allow the Company to estimate your gas usage periodically on your monthly gas bills. The Commission requires that your meter be read at least once every twelve months by Company personnel to obtain an actual reading.

### **METER TAMPERING**

People who install illegal gas connections are breaking the law and endangering themselves, their families and their neighbors. Tampering with gas meters or gas lines can create dangerous conditions.

You can help us eliminate such conditions if you know of, and report to us, any cases of meter tampering. All calls and information will be kept confidential.

### **BILL PAYMENT**

Bills shall be paid by the customer at any office of the Company during its regular office hours or to any one of the Company's authorized collecting agents during the regular office hours of such agent. Any remittance received by the Company by the first class mail bearing a U.S. Postal Office cancellation date corresponding with or previous to the last date of the net payment period will be accepted by the Company as within the net payment period. Please contact a customer service representative for the names and location of authorized collecting agents.

### **CUSTOMER PAYMENT AND USAGE HISTORY**

Upon customer request, the company shall timely provide twelve months of a customer's usage history and twenty-four months of a customer's payment history to the customer.

### **CUSTOMERS ESTABLISHMENT OF CREDIT AND DEPOSITS**

The establishment of credit, deposits and refunds of deposits for Small Commercial Customers are subject to the requirement of Rule 4901:1-13-08 (A) and (B). Residential Customers are subject to the requirement of Rule 4901:1-17-03-4901:1-17-06.

### **BUDGET PLAN**

The budget plan is an ideal way to spread high winter heating bills over the entire year. Under this plan, you will make payments throughout the year, based on an estimate of your annual cost of gas. If you would like information on the budget plan please contact a customer service representative.

### **PAYMENT PLANS**

In addition to the Budget Plan, we offer several other payment plan options for our customers. The one-third plan (available during the winter heating season) allows customers to pay one-third ( $1/3^{\text{rd}}$ ) of the total account balance each month from November through April 15 to maintain gas service. The one-sixth plan requires six equal monthly payments on the past due balance in addition to the current bill each month. The one-ninth ( $1/9^{\text{th}}$ ) requires nine equal monthly payments on the past due balance in addition to a budget payment plan.

For more information, please contact a customer service representative. You may also call the PUCO Consumer Call Center at (800) 686-PUCO (7826).

### **OHIO DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

In 1999, the Ohio General Assembly combined the offices of the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) and the Ohio Energy Credit Program (OEC) under the Ohio Department of Development, Office of

Community Services.

If you need help paying your winter heating bills, you might qualify for financial aid or weatherization assistance through the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP). To learn more, contact the Ohio Development Services Agency, Office of Community Services at 1-800-282-0880 or pick up an Energy Assistance Programs application at the customer service office.

#### **PERCENTAGE OF INCOME PAYMENT PLAN (PIPP PLUS)**

The Percentage of Income Payment Plan Plus (PIPP Plus) is an extended payment arrangement which allows customers to make payments for their gas usage based upon a percentage of their total household income (contact your local county community action agency for income guidelines.) If you qualify, your payment will be six percent (6%) of your monthly household income, or a minimum of \$10.00 whichever is greater.

To qualify, your income must be at or below 150% of the federal poverty level (see table). Customers can apply for PIPP Plus at their local Community Action Agency or by completing and mailing an Energy Assistance Programs application to the Ohio Development Services Agency, Office of Community Assistance, P.O. Box 1240, Columbus, OH 43216. Customers must accept all energy assistance programs offered by Ohio Development Services Agency, if eligible. Customers must submit all required documentation when applying for assistance.

PIPP Plus customers who make at least nine (9) on time and full payments during the period of August thru July of the following year will receive a credit to their total accumulated unpaid gas costs of 100% to 75% depending on the number of on time and full payments made.

Customers are responsible for any debt incurred while on PIPP Plus. Customers who become ineligible for PIPP Plus can enroll on an extended payment plan to pay of the outstanding balance. For more information please contact a customer service representative.

#### **PIPP PLUS REVERIFICATION**

Customers are required to re-verify any change in household income and/or size. If there is no change in household income or size, customers are required to re-verify at least once every twelve months. Customers who fail to re-verify their household income when required to do so, will be removed from the program within 60 days. Customers can re-verify their income by making an appointment at their local Community Action Agency or by completing and mailing an Energy Assistance Programs application to the Ohio Development Services Agency, Office of Community Assistance, P.O. Box 1240, Columbus, OH 43216.

#### **DISCONNECTION OF SERVICE**

Residential service may be disconnected for nonpayment of bills after providing a 14-day advance notice. During the winter period of November 1 through April 15, an additional 10-day notice is required. For Small Commercial customers, such right shall be subject to the requirements of Rule 4901:1-13-08(C) of the Ohio Administrative Code.

#### **WINTER RECONNECTION PROGRAM**

During the Winter Reconnection Period (mid-October thru mid-April), customers who have been disconnected or are about to be disconnected for non-payment can pay up to \$175 (plus an applicable reconnection fee) to restore or maintain service once per the winter heating season. For more information about this program, please contact a customer service representative or the community action agency in your area.

#### **ESTABLISHMENT OF CREDIT**

Each utility may require an applicant for residential natural gas service to satisfactorily establish financial responsibility by one of several possible means. These means are outlined in the Ohio Administrative Code and include ownership of property within the territory served by the utility, a demonstration of a satisfactory credit risk, proof of service from another utility, a guarantor to secure payments of bills in an amount sufficient for sixty days' supply for the service requested, and a cash deposit. Cash deposits will be refunded after the applicant establishes credit through prompt payment of monthly natural gas bills.

#### **LANDLORD AGREEMENT**

Eastern Natural Gas offers a landlord agreement to all property owners whereby continuous gas service could be maintained to any property listed on the agreement when a tenant calls to have gas service taken out of their name. In the event a tenant came up for disconnection due to non payment, Eastern would make every effort to contact the landlord prior to termination and determine whether the landlord wanted the gas service discontinued or returned to their (the landlord's) account at that time. The landlord agrees to be responsible for the payment of all gas service rendered during such periods when the gas service is in the landlord's name and must have their account completely current before any additional site(s) will be turned on or transferred to their

account. For further details of this agreement or to have an agreement sent to you, please contact the office at 1-888-863-0032.

### **MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES**

The following charges shall apply to all classes of customers:

- a) *Connection and Reconnection Charge.* Unless otherwise specifically stated herein, a charge of \$30.00 shall be collected in advance of reconnecting or reestablishing gas service, where service has been terminated for any reason other than safety-related reasons.

The company shall reconnect or reestablish gas service on the same day as a customer requests, provided:

1. The request is made during normal business hours, and
2. The request and satisfactory proof of any deposits and payments are provided at the Company's local office prior to 12:30 p.m. on the day service is to be reconnected or reestablished.

The Company may require a customer to complete or update an application for service when the Company deems necessary before the Company establishes, reestablishes or reconnects gas service.

(a) *Collection Charge.* The Company shall advise a customer subject to disconnection for non-payment of the possibility of being assessed a collection charge at the time an employee accepts a payment at the customer's premises. Notice of this collection charge shall appear on the disconnection notice or accompany the disconnection notice sent to the customer. If payment is made to an employee whose authorized purpose was to disconnect service and who is authorized to accept such payment, or to an employee dispatched to the premises to accept payment, a charge of twenty dollars (\$20.00) may be assessed once for every such visit and shall be payable at the time of such visit.

(b) *Dishonored Check Charge.* Whenever a customer pays a bill by check and the check is returned to the Company by the customer's financial institution for lack of sufficient funds in the customer's account, there shall be a dishonored check charge assessed for each check returned. Such customer shall be charged seventeen dollars (\$17.00) for processing the dishonored check.

(c) *Late Payment Charge.* If a payment of a bill due is not received by the Company offices or by the Company's authorized agent on or before the specified payment date, which shall be the date of the Company's next scheduled meter reading date whether actual or estimated, an additional amount of 1.5% (one and one-half percent) of the unpaid balance on the subsequent bill will become due and payable as part of the customer's total obligation. This provision is not applicable to unpaid account balances of customers enrolled in payment plans pursuant to Section 4901 :1-18-04, Ohio Administrative Code.

(d) *Tie-In Charge.* If a tie-in is required to restore service to the same customer whose service line was cut and plugged because of repeated detection of unauthorized use of service, a charge of \$300.00 or the actual amount incurred by the Company to restore service, whichever is less, shall be assessed to the customer. Upon customer contact, the Company will inform the customer of this charge. Unauthorized use of service includes:

- (1) Detection of turning on the meter by the customer after non-pay turn-off by the Company,
- (2) Detection of turning on the meter and the curb valve by the customer after non-pay turn off by the Company, and;
- (3) Detection of by-passing the meter inlet and outlet connections after removal of the meter by the Company.

(f) *Meter Test Charge.* If a meter is tested at the request of a customer and the result demonstrates that the meter was operating within accepted tolerances (plus or minus 3%), the customer shall be charged the actual cost of the test. The customer will be advised of the meter test charge at the time of the request for the test. If the meter was not operating within accepted tolerances, there shall be no charge for the test or removal.

(g) *Trip Charge.* Whenever the Company makes a service call to a customer's premise, the customer shall be assessed a fee consisting of the average hourly total trip cost, including equipment, for the recent six (6) month period, with a one-half hour minimum. The customer shall be advised of this charge before the company employee comes to the premise. This charge will not apply to trips caused by a customer report of a gas odor.

These Rules and Regulations are subjects to and incorporate herein all orders, rules, and regulations applicable to the Company, issued or established from time-to-time by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

The Company reserves the right to modify, alter, or amend these Rules and Regulations, and further reserves the right to make other rules and regulations as the Company may deem necessary, prudent, or convenient in the conduct of the Company's business, as approved by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.

### CUSTOMER DISPUTES

If your questions are not resolved after you have called Eastern Natural Gas, you may call the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) toll free at 1-800-686-7826, or for 1TY/TDD toll free at 1-800-686-1570, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays, or visit the PUCO website at [www.PUCO.ohio.gov](http://www.PUCO.ohio.gov)

Residential customers may also call the Ohio's Consumers' Counsel (OCC), toll free at 1-877-742-5622 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. weekdays, or visit the OCC website at [www.pickocc.org](http://www.pickocc.org)

### AVAILABILITY OF RATE INFORMATION AND ALTERNATIVES UPON REQUEST

Customers may access the Company's current tariffs thru the web site of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio ([www.PUCO.ohio.gov](http://www.PUCO.ohio.gov)). Customers may also view the Company's current tariffs and alternatives at the Company's offices during normal business hours. Upon written request, the Company will provide a copy of its current tariffs.

### MINIMUM SERVICE STANDARDS

Customers may obtain a copy of the minimum gas service standards on the Commission's website ([www.PUCO.ohio.gov](http://www.PUCO.ohio.gov)) or obtain a copy from the Commission upon request

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

#### EASTERN NATURAL GAS

Billing inquiries.....1-888-863-0032  
Service office .....1-888-863-0032

**EMERGENCY SERVICE**.....1-888-784-6160

#### PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

For unresolved inquiries..... 1-800-686-7826

HEARING IMPAIRED TTY-TDD.....711

OHIO UTILITIES PROTECTION SERVICE (OUPS) .....811

OHIO CONSUMERS COUNCIL .....1-877-742-5622

#### EMERGENCY HELP

Emergency assistance may be made available for utility payments by contacting the following agencies:

#### OHIO DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

P.O. Box 1240

Columbus, Ohio 4321.....1-800-282-0880

### INSTALLATION OF SERVICE

If you are requesting an installation of service or a service upgrade, please contact the Company concerning the approximate period for completion, scheduling of appointments, and other information regarding the installation of service or of service upgrades.

#### CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

#### IT'S THE LAW!!!

Please contact us to have our underground facilities located before doing any excavation in or around our service area at the following numbers:



Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.

CALL TWO WORKING DAYS BEFORE DIGGING

CALL 811

or Ohio Utilities Protection Service