



## PSC Provides More Information on Ending Utility Disconnection and Late Payment Fee Moratorium

By Curt Witynski, Deputy Director, League of Wisconsin Municipalities

On June 26 the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (PSC) issued an [order](#) providing municipal utilities with more detailed information about ending the COVID-19 related moratorium on service disconnections and charging late payment fees.

The Order specifies the following:

**Disconnection or Refusal of Service.** The Commission determines that a reasonable balance for both utilities and customers is to lift the temporary prohibition against disconnecting or refusing service and allow utilities to issue disconnection notices on July 15, 2020, with a minimum 10-day window so that the first date of disconnection would occur on or after July 25, 2020. Under normal circumstances, utilities may, but are not required to, disconnect service for nonpayment pursuant to the requirements of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. Therefore, a utility may commence issuing disconnection notices on July 15, 2020, or it may roll out a phased approach based on thresholds as required by operational conditions and constraints, as long as the approach is nondiscriminatory.

**Refusal of Service for Failure to Provide Documentation of Residency or Identity.** The Commission finds it reasonable to lift this provision as follows. With regard to an existing customer who has failed to provide documentation of residency and identity, a utility may send a disconnection notice beginning on July 15, 2020, and may disconnect service beginning on July 25, 2020. With regard to a new customer requesting service, a utility may refuse service for failure to provide documentation of residency and identity beginning on July 25, 2020.

**Deposits.** The Commission finds it reasonable to lift the suspension on customer deposits effective July 31, 2020. The Commission determines that continuing this temporary provision until the end of July will provide customers with time to become aware of the lifting of the provision and bring past due balances to their accounts current to avoid being required to make a deposit.

**Late Payment Fees.** The Commission finds it reasonable to lift this temporary provision effective July 15, 2020. Late fees imposed after this provision is lifted may only be assessed on amounts incurred on or after July 15, 2020. The Commission further finds it reasonable to provide that, beginning July 15, 2020, utilities may elect to continue to waive late fees in a non-discriminatory manner until December 31, 2020, notwithstanding any tariff provision to the contrary. Utilities that elect to continue to waive late fees shall notify the Commission of their plans for waiving fees.

**Landlord Requested Termination of Municipal Electric Services.** The Commission finds it reasonable to lift this temporary provision effective July 25, 2020, consistent with the first available date the Commission sets for utilities to disconnect service for nonpayment. The termination of this provision ends the Commission's tracking of this requested activity.

**Credit Card Convenience Fees.** The Commission finds it reasonable to lift this temporary provision as follows. Utilities that have received authorization to waive credit card convenience fees through the process set forth in the Commission's order of March 24, 2020 in this docket shall resume charging such fees effective December 31, 2020, except that such utilities may choose to resume charging such fees at an earlier date upon submission of a request to the Commission.

**Deferred Payment Agreements.** The Commission finds it reasonable to lift the temporary provisions relating to DPAs effective August 15, 2020. A utility must offer a DPA to any customer unable to pay their bill in full until August 15, 2020. Following that effective date, a utility may decline to offer a subsequent DPA or initiate a process to disconnect service if applicable without offering a subsequent DPA, unless a residential customer has had a significant change in ability to pay since the previous, defaulted DPA was established. Pursuant to the specific requirements and procedures established in the Wisconsin Administrative Code regarding DPAs, if a residential Docket 5-UI-120 10 customer has not defaulted on a DPA, the utility shall offer a DPA. As of August 15, 2020, utilities may, but will no longer be required, to offer DPAs to commercial customers.