



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 4901:1-21-18 Consolidated billing requirements.

Effective: December 1, 2014

(A) This rule applies to a competitive retail electric service (CRES) provider that issues customers a consolidated electric bill that includes both electric utility and CRES provider charges for electric services. Nothing in this rule affects the obligations of the electric utility to provide disconnection notices.

(B) A supplier agreement between an electric utility and a CRES provider must provide that if the CRES provider collects customer payments on behalf of the electric utility, the customer's liability to the electric utility ceases to the extent of the payment made and applicable to the customer's account.

(C) Consolidated bills shall be accurate, rendered at monthly intervals, and shall contain clear and understandable form and language. All consolidated customer bills issued by or on behalf of an electric utility and a CRES provider must include at least the following information:

- (1) The customer's name, billing address, and service address.
- (2) The electric utility's twenty-four hour, local or toll-free number for reporting service emergencies.
- (3) The dates of the service period covered by the bill.
- (4) Current electric charges, separated from gas charges, if these charges appear on the same bill, but only to the extent that the biller provides both electric and gas services.
- (5) Applicable billing determinants: beginning meter read, ending meter read, demand meter read, multipliers, consumption, and demand.
- (6) Identification of estimated bills.



(7) Any nonrecurring charge(s).

(8) Net-metered usage for customer generators, if applicable.

(9) Each charge for nontariffed and/or nonregulated service or product, if applicable, and the name and toll-free number of each provider of such service(s).

(10) Amount due for previous billing period.

(11) Total payments, late payment charges or gross/net charges, and total credits applied during the billing period.

(12) Total consolidated amount due and payable, or, if applicable, the total consolidated budget bill amount.

(13) Due date for payment to keep the account current. The due date for residential bills shall not be less than fourteen calendar days from the date of postmark. For residential bills being issued from outside the state of Ohio the due date shall not be less than twenty-one calendar days.

(14) Name and address of company to whom payments should be made.

(15) The following notice:

"If your complaint is not resolved after you have called your electric supplier and/or your electric utility, or for general utility information, residential and business customers may contact the public utilities commission of Ohio (PUCO) for assistance at 1-800-686-7826 (toll-free) from eight a.m. to five p.m. weekdays, or at <http://www.puco.ohio.gov>. Hearing or speech impaired customers may contact the PUCO via 7-1-1 (Ohio relay service).

The Ohio consumers' counsel (OCC) represents residential utility customers in matters before the PUCO. The OCC can be contacted at 1-877-742-5622 (toll-free) from eight a.m. to five p.m. weekdays, or at <http://www.pickocc.org>."



(16) An explanation of codes and abbreviations used.

(17) At a minimum, definitions for the following terms, or like terms used by the company, if applicable: customer charge, delivery charge, estimated reading, generation charge, kilowatt hour (kWh), shopping incentive or shopping credit, late payment charge, and transition charge.

(18) The price-to-compare for residential bills and a notice that such customers can obtain a written explanation of the price-to-compare from their electric utility.

(D) In addition to the information required pursuant to paragraph (C) of this rule, each consolidated bill issued must include, in that portion of the bill which details the charges from the electric utility, at least the following information:

(1) Electric utility account number.

(2) Applicable rate schedule.

(3) A numerical statement of the customer's historical consumption for each of the preceding twelve months, and both the total and average consumption for such twelve-month period.

(4) Specific tariffed charges to the extent applicable: customer charge, delivery charge, transition charge, shopping incentive or shopping credit, and other conceptually similar tariffed charges.

(5) If the customer is on a budget plan with the electric utility only, the monthly budget amount and current balance of electric utility account.

(6) Current charges.

(7) The electric utility's local or toll-free number and address for questions and complaints.

(E) In addition to the information required pursuant to paragraph (C) of this rule, each consolidated bill issued must include, in that portion of the bill which details the charges from the CRES provider, at least the following information:



- (1) Customer's CRES account number, if different from the electric utility account number.

- (2) To the extent applicable, itemization for each charge including: for fixed-price offers, the unit price per kWh for competitive service; for all other offers for electric generation service, an explanation of how the rate is derived; and any other information the customer would need to recalculate the bill for accuracy.

- (3) If the customer is on a budget plan with the CRES provider only, the monthly budget amount and the current balance of the CRES account.

- (4) Current charges.

- (5) A highlighted notice of any change in rates, terms, or conditions appearing on the first two consecutive bills following the occurrence of any such changes and a clear explanation of each change.

- (6) For flat-monthly rate offers, a specific listing of the rate to be charged per month for the duration of the contract.

- (F) Consolidated bill format. Any new consolidated bill format proposed by a CRES provider shall be filed with the commission for approval. If an application for a consolidated bill format is not acted upon by the commission within forty-five days after it is filed, the consolidated bill format shall be deemed approved on the forty-sixth day after filing.

- (G) Transfer of customer billing information.
 - (1) The non-billing electric utility shall furnish the applicable required bill content information to the billing party in a timely manner and in a mutually agreed upon electronic format for inclusion in the consolidated customer bill.

 - (2) The billing CRES provider shall include in the consolidated bill all required bill content information furnished by the nonbilling electric utility.



(3) An entity ordered by the commission to provide any bill content, message, insert, or notice remains responsible to provide such information to its customers, although the information may be provided through the consolidated bill.

(H) Partial payment priority.

(1) A customer's partial payment shall be credited in the following order:

(a) Billed and past due CRES provider charges or, if applicable, CRES provider payment arrangement or past due CRES provider budget billing.

(b) Billed and past due electric utility distribution, standard offer generation, and transmission charges or, if applicable, electric utility payment arrangement or past due electric utility budget billing.

(c) Billed and due current electric utility distribution and transmission charges or current electric utility budget billing.

(d) Billed and due current CRES provider charges or current CRES provider budget billing.

(e) Other past due and current nonregulated charges, excluding CRES charges.

(2) Exceptions to the partial payment priority.

(a) Payments in full of the undisputed amount related to a bona fide dispute do not constitute partial payments. Payments made on accounts for which there is a bona fide dispute shall be credited to the undisputed portion of the account.

(b) If a customer pays an agreed-upon electric utility and/or CRES budget payment amount, then that payment shall be considered payment in full for the current bill.

(I) Upon the customer's switch from a CRES provider, the billing party shall identify for the



customer and state on the bill as of what date the billing party will no longer remit payments to the previous CRES provider and any outstanding balance due to the previous CRES provider.

(J) Any CRES provider wishing to issue consolidated billing statements online shall comply with the following guidelines:

(1) A customer shall not be required to use online billing.

(2) No enrollment or usage fees shall be assessed to a customer who chooses to receive bills and/or customer information online.

(3) The online billing statement shall include all requirements listed in paragraphs (C), (D), and (E) of this rule.

(4) The CRES provider shall maintain a secure and encrypted site that is to be accessed only by the customer of record after completing a secure registration process.

(5) Any fees to accept online payments shall be clearly disclosed in payment window(s).

(6) Any payment made online shall be treated as a payment made at the company's business office and shall be posted to the account in accordance with paragraph (E) of rule 4901:1-21-14 of the Administrative Code. The time needed to post the payment shall be clearly stated.

(7) If a customer chooses to use online billing, the customer shall not be restricted to making payments online in the future. All payment methods shall continue to be available to the customer.