



CONSUMER COMPLAINT OPTIONS AT THE PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION (PUC)



OPTIONS:

- ➔ Contacting Your Utility or Company
- ➔ Filing Informal Complaint with the PUC
- ➔ Filing Formal Complaint with the PUC
- ➔ Requesting Mediation by the PUC
- ➔ Filing Comment on Proposed Rate Increase with the PUC
- ➔ Filing Formal Complaint to Proposed Rate Increase with the PUC
- ➔ Contacting Other Agencies for Assistance

CONTACTING YOUR UTILITY OR COMPANY

- Consumers should always first contact the utility or company to give them an opportunity to resolve the issue before filing a complaint with the PUC
- For some types of informal and formal complaints involving billing, service or termination, consumers are required by law to first contact the utility

FILING INFORMAL COMPLAINT

- Consumers may file informal complaints with the PUC about problems with a utility (such as billing or service) by:
 - Using the informal complaint form available on the website at www.puc.pa.gov
 - Calling the Bureau of Consumer Services (BCS) toll free at **1-800-692-7380**
 - Sending an informal complaint by mail to BCS at:
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265
- Once BCS receives an informal complaint, an investigator will:
 - Investigate the complaint and work with the parties to resolve the complaint
 - Provide the outcome of the investigation, either by letter or verbally to the customer and utility or company
- The informal complaint process is simpler and less time-consuming than a formal complaint process and avoids the need for a legal proceeding
- Informal complaints are confidential and not available for public inspection

FILING FORMAL COMPLAINT

- Consumers may file formal complaints about problems with a utility (such as billing or service) with the PUC by either eFiling or mailing a form to the Secretary's Bureau at:
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265
- A formal complaint form may be:
 - Downloaded by selecting Filing&Resources/Online Forms from the website at www.puc.pa.gov or
 - Received by mail by calling the toll-free complaint hotline at **1-800-692-7380**
- Filing a formal complaint begins a legal proceeding before a PUC administrative law judge who holds hearings, if necessary, to gather evidence and issues a decision
 - Participation in this proceeding is necessary to present evidence and prove facts and issues related to your formal complaint
 - Individuals are not required to have a lawyer to file a formal complaint, but the utility or company is required by law to be represented by a lawyer

(Please read the other side before deciding what to file or do)

REQUESTING MEDIATION

- Consumers filing formal complaints may request mediation, which is offered by the PUC
- If the request is granted, the consumer has a neutral mediator who tries to help resolve the dispute in a way that is agreeable to both parties
- Parties using the mediation process are not required to have a lawyer

FILING COMMENT ON PROPOSED RATE INCREASE

- Consumers may file comments about a utility's proposed rate increase by mailing a form to the Secretary's Bureau at
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265
- A comment form may be:
 - Downloaded by selecting Filing&Resources/Online Forms from the website at www.puc.pa.gov or
 - Received by mail by calling the toll-free complaint hotline at **1-800-692-7380**
- Comments are placed in the document folder of the case for review by the presiding officer, the parties and PUC staff
- Submitting a comment does not make the consumer a party to the case

FILING FORMAL COMPLAINT TO PROPOSED RATE INCREASE

- Consumers may file formal complaints to a utility's proposed rate increase with the PUC by either eFiling or mailing a form to the Secretary's Bureau at:
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265
- A formal complaint form may be:
 - Downloaded by selecting Filing&Resources/Online Forms from the website at www.puc.pa.gov
 - Received by mail by calling the toll free complaint hotline at **1-800-692-7380**
- Filing a formal complaint begins a legal proceeding before a PUC administrative law judge who holds hearings, if necessary, to gather evidence and issues a decision
 - Participation in this proceeding is necessary to present evidence and prove facts and issues related to your formal complaint
 - Individuals are not required to have a lawyer to file a formal complaint, but the utility is required by law to be represented by a lawyer

CONTACTING OTHER AGENCIES FOR ASSISTANCE

- Consumers may contact the Office of Consumer Advocate for assistance with utility problems by calling toll-free at 1-800-684-6560
- Small business consumers with less than 250 employees who receive utility service under a small business rate schedule (such as GS) may contact the Office of Small Business Advocate for assistance with utility problems by calling 717-783-2525

LEGAL REPRESENTATION

You are not required to have a lawyer represent you in the complaint process before the Public Utility Commission. However, if you are interested in receiving legal representation, you may contact the Widener Harrisburg Civil Law Clinic located at 3605 Vartan Way, Harrisburg, PA 17110, by phone at 717-541-0320 or via email at lawclinicb@mail.widener.edu.

For additional information see Widener Harrisburg's Civil Law Clinic's website <http://law.widener.edu/Academics/ClinicalProgramsandProfessionalTraining/Clinics/HarrisburgCivilLawClinic.aspx>. Based on your income, legal representation may be available to you at no cost or a reduced fee.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION:

Write
PA Public Utility Commission
Secretary's Bureau
P.O. Box 3265
Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

Call for Filing Requirements
1-717-772-7777

Visit our website
www.puc.pa.gov



January 2014