



Assistance Agencies

Aiken/Barnwell Counties Community Action Commission, Inc.
(803) 648-6836

Beaufort/Jasper Economic Opportunity Commission, Inc.
(843) 470-4508

Carolina Community Actions, Inc.
(803) 329-5195

Charleston County Human Services Commission
(843) 723-9285

Chesterfield-Marlboro Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.
(843) 320-9760

Darlington County Community Action Agency
(843) 332-1135

GLEAMNS Human Resources Commission, Inc.
(864) 223-8434

Lowcountry Community Action Agency, Inc.
(843) 549-5576

O-C-A-B Community Action Agency, Inc.
(803) 536-1027

Pee Dee Community Action Agency
(843) 678-3400

Piedmont Community Actions, Inc.
(864) 327-4546

Sunbelt Human Advancement Resources, Inc. (SHARE)
(864) 269-0700

Waccamaw Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.
(843) 234-4100

Wateree Community Actions, Inc.
(803) 775-4354

American Red Cross - Central South Carolina
(803) 540-1200

Call 2-1-1 anytime 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to connect to vital services in your community. This service is free and multilingual. 2-1-1 is for finding community health and human services resources.


ABOUT THE ORS


The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) is charged with representing the public interest in utility regulation for the major utility industries: electric, natural gas, telecommunications, transportation, and water/wastewater.


The public interest is defined by the SC General Assembly as follows: the concerns of the using and consuming public with respect to public utility services, regardless of the class of customer, and preservation of continued investment in and maintenance of utility facilities so as to provide reliable and high-quality utility services.

ORS Consumer Services Can Help

If you've spoken with your utility and still need help, ORS Consumer Services can contact the company on your behalf. The ORS can check to see whether the utility has followed all applicable regulations. Staff can also direct you to social services agencies that may have available funds to assist with your utility bills.

 (803) 737-5230 (Columbia, SC)
(800) 922-1531 (toll-free in SC)

 (803) 737-0801

 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM
Monday - Friday (closed state holidays)
Messages can be left on 24-hour ORS Consumer Services hotline.



Electric & Natural Gas Safety Net

GETTING BEHIND ON YOUR BILL?

Electric and natural gas utilities offer safety net programs for consumers.

They are:

- **Third-Party Notification**
- **Special Needs Customers (SNC)**
- **Deferred Payment Plan (DPP)**
- **Disconnection Temperature Rule**
- **Written Notice of Termination for Non-Payment**
- **Medical Certificate**

Third-Party Notification

Consumers may name a third party to receive a copy of a disconnection notice for their account in the event electric or natural gas service is scheduled to be disconnected.

To designate a third party, the utility needs the following information for that person:

- Name
- Address
- Telephone number

Special Needs Customers (SNC)

New consumers are told about SNC registration by the utility company. SNCs are:

- 65 years of age or older,
- Disabled,
- Chronically ill,
- Seriously ill, or
- On life support as noted by a medical certificate

Consumers who meet the criteria for special needs should register with their electric or natural gas utility. If requested, the utility will provide to the consumer:

- SNC registration form
- Medical certificate form

Deferred Payment Plan (DPP)

In a DPP, the utility company may divide the past due balance into a maximum of 6 monthly payments.

- The consumer must continue to pay current billed charges.
- If the consumer does not keep up with the payment arrangement, the utility may disconnect service after sending a written notice.

Disconnection Temperature Rule

During the heating and cooling seasons, service for consumers will not be disconnected if temperatures fall within a certain range.

Disconnection is suspended when:

- Average forecasted temperature is 32 degrees Fahrenheit or below for a 48-hour period
- Forecasted heat index is 105 degrees Fahrenheit or more for a 24-hour period

Written Termination Notices

These notices are sent to the consumer prior to termination of service for non-payment. The notification process is as follows:

1. Not less than 10 days prior to termination of service, the utility must send a written notice to the consumer and any designated third party informing the consumer that payment is due or the consumer will be disconnected.
2. If no payment is received or no payment arrangement is made, the utility must send a written final notice to the consumer and any designated third party.

Medical Certificate

A medical certificate prevents disconnection of electric and/or natural gas service from December through March for eligible residential consumers.

- A certificate must be completed by the consumer and the consumer's licensed healthcare provider.
- The health care provider certifies that the consumer received a medical exam and that disconnection of electric and natural gas service would be dangerous to the consumer's health because of a medical condition.
- By completing the form, the consumer certifies he/she is unable to pay in full or by installment payments.

The medical certificate does not mean the consumer no longer has to pay his/her bill. Upon expiration of the medical certificate or through the end of March – whichever comes first – service may be disconnected if payment is not made.

