



PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF TEXAS

CUSTOMER PROTECTIONS

*in a Competitive
Electric Market*



TEXAS
ELECTRIC
CHOICE

THE POWER IS YOURS. USE IT.



PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF TEXAS

Most of Texas now has electric competition. This means that you can choose your Retail Electric Provider, the company that provides electricity to your home or business. You have the option of shopping for a company that meets your needs based on price, service or environmental concerns.

A competitive electric market is expected to bring lower prices over time as well as speed the development of new products and services.

The Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) wants you to know that your rights as a customer will continue to be protected in a competitive market. In fact, the PUC plays a bigger role in enforcing customer rights and resolving customer disputes as electric competition takes place in the Lone Star State. And, the PUC continues to regulate the delivery of power to Texas homes and businesses to ensure the safety and reliability of your electric service.

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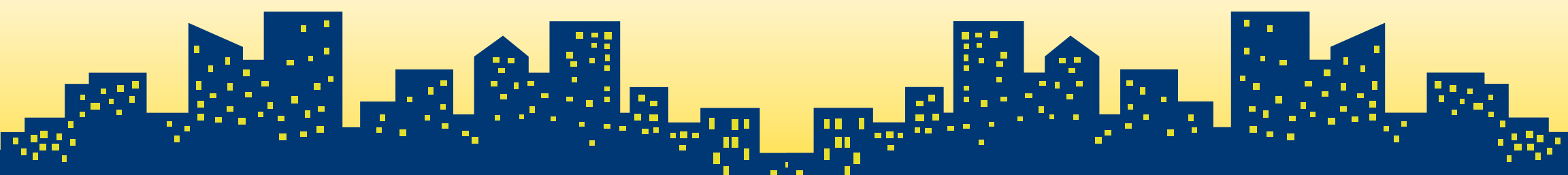
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT TEXAS ELECTRIC CHOICE VISIT

POWERTOCHOOSE.ORG

OR CALL THE ANSWER CENTER TOLL-FREE AT

1-866-PWR-4-TEX

(1-866-797-4839)



Electric Choice Strengthens Customer Protections

The Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) protects you against misleading, discriminatory or anti-competitive practices by Retail Electric Providers (REPs). The PUC continues to enforce customer protections in today's competitive marketplace. These customer protections include:

- **Non-Discrimination.** In addition to standard discrimination prohibitions, a Retail Electric Provider may not deny service or discriminate in the marketing of electric service based on a customer's income level, location in an economically distressed area, or qualification for low-income or energy efficiency services.
- **Slamming and Cramming.** Slamming is switching your electric service provider without your permission. Cramming is adding charges to your electric bill for optional services without your permission. Both slamming and cramming are illegal.
- **Dispute Resolution.** All Retail Electric Providers must promptly investigate customer complaints. All customers have the right to make complaints about a Retail Electric Provider to the Public Utility Commission.
- **Privacy of Information.** No Retail Electric Provider can release any customer-specific information to another Retail Electric Provider or any other company or individual without your permission.

In addition, all Retail Electric Providers must follow stronger customer protections, which further protect your rights in a competitive market. All Retail Electric Providers must provide:

- **The Electricity Facts Label.** An Electricity Facts Label gives you pricing information, contract terms, sources of generation, and levels of emissions in a standardized format so that you can compare offers between electric providers.
- **A Terms of Service agreement.** This is your contract. It informs you of a Retail Electric Provider's contract terms and conditions.
- **A "Your Rights as a Customer" disclosure.** This information covers your standard customer protections as mandated by the Public Utility Commission.
- **Non-English language materials.** All Retail Electric Providers must make customer information available in Spanish. Additionally, an electric provider must make all materials available in the language(s) in which they market electric service.

Certain Retail Electric Providers, called **Affiliate Retail Electric Providers** (see below), are required to offer you additional protections. If you have not chosen another electric provider, you are most likely receiving service from the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider in your area. In addition to the standard customer protections, the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider is required to offer customers:

- The option of receiving a paper bill or an electronic bill;
- The option of a deferred payment plan (to creditworthy customers); and
- The option to pay a deposit instead of demonstrating creditworthiness.



What is the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider?

The Affiliate Retail Electric Provider was part of the original electric company that generated and sold electricity in your area. Now, the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider only sells electricity and provides customer service.

What is a Provider of Last Resort (POLR)?

A POLR serves as a "back-up" electric provider. In the event a Retail Electric Provider goes out of business, or leaves the market for any reason, the POLR will automatically become your Retail Electric Provider. You will not be without electric service.



Frequently Asked Questions

Can I switch Retail Electric Providers? Yes. Be sure to ask your electric provider about any fees or charges for canceling your contract. Also, review your Terms of Service agreement for additional details concerning your contract terms.

How do I choose a Retail Electric Provider? Call the *Texas Electric Choice Answer Center* at 1-866-PWR-4-TEX (1-866-797-4839), or visit www.powertochoose.org for a list of Retail Electric Providers offering service in your area. Contact one or more of the certified electric providers to compare offers. You can also compare offers from providers in your area at www.powertochoose.org. Once you have made your selection, contact the electric provider directly to sign up for service.

Who do I call with a billing question? Contact your Retail Electric Provider. If you feel that your concerns have not been adequately addressed, you may call the Public Utility Commission's Customer Hotline at 1-888-782-8477.

Do I have to switch from my current electric provider? No. If you decide not to switch Retail Electric Providers, your electric service will be provided by the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider. The Affiliate Retail Electric Provider was part of the original electric company that generated and sold electricity in your area, that now only sells electricity and provides customer service.

What information do I need to provide in order to receive service from a Retail Electric Provider? Each Retail Electric Provider has different requirements. Electric providers are allowed to run credit checks, and some may request your Social Security number. Affiliate Retail Electric Providers must accept a deposit in lieu of requiring a customer to have established credit. Additionally, an Affiliate Retail Electric Provider may accept either your Social Security number or driver's license number.

What happens if I don't pay my bill and I receive a disconnection notice? State law requires that your electricity cannot be disconnected for non-payment during periods of extreme hot or cold weather for your area.* In any other situation, you must make payment arrangements with your Retail Electric Provider to pay your bill. If you fail to make such arrangements and do not pay your bill, your service can be disconnected.

If you receive service from the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider (the original electric company in your area), you have 10 days from when the disconnection notice was issued to make payment arrangements or pay the amount due.**

If you receive a non-payment disconnection notice from a Competitive Retail Electric Provider (a new electric company to your area), you have 10 days from when the notice was issued to make payment arrangements. If you do not pay your bill or make arrangements within the notification period, your service will be switched to the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider in your area. In this situation, you may have to pay a two-month deposit and any past due bills (if any) owed to the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider.

Who do I call during an emergency or power outage? This information can be found on your electric bill. Your local wires company, or local distribution utility, maintains the poles and wires that deliver power to your home or business. Your Retail Electric Provider will provide you with contact information in case of an emergency or power outage.

What if I don't want to receive telemarketing calls? The PUC has established a "Do Not Call List" for those customers who do not want to be called by telemarketers on behalf of Retail Electric Providers. Call toll-free 1-866-TX-NO-CALL (1-866-896-6225) or visit www.texasnocall.com to register your phone number for a small fee.

What steps do I take if I think my rights as an electric customer have been violated? If you feel that your rights have been violated, call the PUC's toll-free Customer Hotline at 1-888-782-8477.

* Extreme weather is when the previous day's highest temperature did not exceed 32 degrees and the temperature is predicted to remain at or below that level for the next 24 hours anywhere in the county according to the National Weather Service OR The National Weather Service issues a heat advisory for your county or when such advisory has been issued on any one of the preceding two calendar days in your county.

** The 10 day notice period begins when the notice was issued by the Affiliate Retail Electric Provider or the competitive electric provider, NOT when you receive the notice.

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