



Shut-off/Termination of Service?

Know Your Rights:

No regulated utility company may terminate your service without following the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities' rules and regulations.

WHO is Protected?

Any customer of private **water companies** (not municipal or homeowner association owned), and of **gas** and **electric companies** (including municipal light/gas/electric departments).
220 CMR 25.01(1)

WHAT are the Protections?

If you're unable to pay any portion of your bill that's overdue **because of financial hardship**, a utility company cannot shut off your service if any of the following applies to you:

Seriously Ill. Anyone in the home is seriously ill.

Infant. A child under 12 months lives with you.

All adults in your home are **65+ years old**.

Winter Protection. Between November 15th and March 15th, a utility company cannot shut off service if it provides heat or operates the heating system. This means that if you use electricity or gas to heat your home, your utility company cannot shut off your service. 220 CMR 25.03

And if your utility company sends you collection forms, these documents **must prominently and clearly include information on the DPU's consumer shut-off protections**.

220 CMR 25.03(5)

The Shut-off Process:

A utility company is only able to shut off your service if your bill is unpaid and at **least 45 days past due**. The company must also send you a **second payment request** and a **final notice**, which must be at least 72 hours before your electric or gas service is turned off and 36 hours before your water service is turned off.

220 CMR 25.02(3)

A utility company is only able to shut off service **Monday through Thursday** (not holidays) between **8:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.**

220 CMR 25.02(3)

Upon entering any premises and before shutting off service, the company representative **must tell you that your service will be shut off**. They **must present you with a notice of the DPU's protections and a financial hardship form**.

And, if you claim protection, **they must postpone shut-off for 72 hours** so you may submit documentation supporting your claim.

220 CMR 25.03(7)

IF YOU RECEIVE A SHUT-OFF NOTICE OR HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT TERMINATION OF SERVICE, CONTACT DPU'S CONSUMER DIVISION:

DPUConsumer.Complaints@mass.gov

(617) 737-2836

(877) 886-5066 (toll free)