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# CUSTOMER REFERENCE GUIDE

## Electric & Natural Gas

2023-2024

[eastonutilities.com](http://eastonutilities.com)

Para Español contactenos al 410-822-6110 o via [info@eastonutilities.com](mailto:info@eastonutilities.com)

# YOUR RIGHTS & OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

As your locally owned utility, Easton Utilities wants you to know your rights as a customer and to provide you with helpful information about our services and programs.

Each quarter of the year we will give you information on our services and programs in our Connections newsletter. The newsletter and other informational inserts are included with your bill. You can also visit our website at [www.eastonutilities.com](http://www.eastonutilities.com) for more information.

Utility service tariffs are part of every contract for service and are available on our website. All utility service contracts, improvements, and extensions shall be subject to the applicable tariff(s) in effect at the time service is provided.

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Call us at 410-822-6110, stop in, email us at [info@eastonutilities.com](mailto:info@eastonutilities.com), or write to: Easton Utilities, 201 North Washington Street, P.O. Box 1189, Easton, Maryland 21601. This information has been prepared in compliance with the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 20.30.04.03.

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## INTRODUCTION

Easton Utilities is responsible for the operation, management and maintenance of the electric, gas, water, wastewater, cable television and internet systems for the Town of Easton and portions of the surrounding area. Easton Utilities was the first municipality in the State of Maryland to own all of its utilities. Today, it is one of two municipal operations in Maryland that can generate its own power and is the only municipally owned natural gas system. Easton Utilities is a member of the PJM Interconnection power pool. This arrangement provides our customers with reliable and cost-efficient energy. Easton Utilities provides electric service to approximately 11,000 customers and natural gas to approximately 4,800 customers.

The operation and management of Easton Utilities is exercised by a board of three Commissioners who are local residents appointed to six-year terms by the Mayor of Easton with approval of the Town Council. The Commission and the Mayor and Town Council of Easton must approve proposed new rates. In addition, before electric and gas rates become effective, they must be authorized by the Maryland Public Service Commission.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

### Emergency Service

Call 410-822-6110, 24-hours a day, to report downed power lines, gas leaks, outages or any other emergency situation. Additional notification options include using My Account online or via the Easton Utilities My Account mobile app. Do not use social media to notify us about outages or emergencies as it is not monitored in real time.

### Customer Service Center

The Easton Utilities Customer Service Center is located at 201 N. Washington Street in Easton. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8 am - 4:30 pm (except holidays). Telephone, 410-822-6110.

# SAFETY

## Miss Utility, Dial 8-1-1

**Call Before You Dig - It's a Maryland law!** If you are planning to dig anywhere in the state, you are required to call Miss Utility (a free utility service locator) 72 hours prior to digging by dialing 800-441-8355. Anyone failing to comply with Miss Utility laws is subject to a civil penalty of \$1,000 or 10 times the cost of repairs. Homeowners may also call Miss Utility by dialing 8-1-1 or enter a notice to excavate at [www.missutility.net](http://www.missutility.net).

## Outages

If you experience an outage, contact us so we can correct the problem as soon as possible. We appreciate your patience during an outage and we want you to know we make every effort to restore service as quickly and safely as possible. Customers are responsible for protecting their sensitive electronic equipment from voltage surges and fluctuations. Talk to an electrician about the proper surge protection or uninterruptible power supply for your home or office.

## Power Lines

- Avoid overhead wires when placing or moving ladders or other metal objects.
- Do not plant trees under power lines.
- Do not climb utility poles, towers or structures.
- Do not climb trees that are close to power lines.
- Avoid flying kites, metallic balloons and model airplanes near power lines. If one gets caught in the lines, call Easton Utilities to remove it.
- Do not place swimming or wading pools under power lines.
- Do not allow children on or near pad-mounted transformers.
- Do not enter or attempt to retrieve anything from an electric substation.
- Do not erect antennas near power lines.

## Fallen Wires

A downed electrical wire is dangerous. Stay away, warn others and call us immediately. If a wire falls across your car, do not get out of the car until emergency help arrives.

## **Gas Leak**

The “rotten-egg” odor added to natural gas is a built-in safety signal. If you smell gas outdoors, call us immediately. If you smell gas indoors, check pilot lights and burner valves. If neither is the cause, evacuate, then call Easton Utilities immediately at 410-822-6110. Our special equipment will detect the source of the leak. We will shut off the gas to secure the location and offer recommendations for repairing the problem. Never be embarrassed about calling should the odor turn out not to be a natural gas leak.

## **Buried Gas Piping**

Customers are responsible for monitoring, maintaining and repairing their buried natural gas piping in order to reduce the risk of gas service line accidents.

- Easton Utilities does not monitor, maintain, or repair any of its customer’s piping. Customer’s piping includes all fuel pipe, including buried pipe which may be “downstream of the gas meter.” This means the piping between the gas meter and the appliances in your home.
- If the Customer’s buried piping is not maintained, it may be subject to the potential hazards of corrosion and leakage.

## **Carbon Monoxide**

Improper appliance ventilation can cause carbon monoxide poisoning. Stuffy or foul-smelling air, high humidity and an accumulation of soot from fireplaces or furnaces are signs of the buildup of this colorless and odorless gas. Overexposure to carbon monoxide is dangerous. Symptoms may include headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting and loss of muscle control. Prolonged exposure can lead to unconsciousness and brain damage or death. If you think you have been exposed to carbon monoxide, call 9-1-1, get lots of fresh air and seek medical attention immediately.

## **Tampering**

Tampering with utility lines, pipes or meters is a dangerous crime. Tampering with any utility equipment may result in the termination of services and/or criminal prosecution. If you know of or suspect tampering, call 410-822-6110. All information will be kept confidential.

# APPLICATION FOR SERVICE

## **New Service**

Applications for new electric and/or gas service may be made in-person at the Customer Service Center, over the telephone or online at [www.eastonutilities.com](http://www.eastonutilities.com). Application for new service should be made as soon as construction plans have been completed.

## **Existing Service**

When electric and/or gas service already exists on your premises, but is not active in your name, an application must be made, in person or over the phone, at least two working days prior to the day you wish the service to be activated or transferred. If you lease or rent the property, please bring a copy of the lease with you.

## **Proof of Identity**

To protect our customers' personal identity information, and in compliance with federal regulations, all customers will be required to provide two forms of U.S. government-issued personal identification. One form must have a photograph. Only those authorized will be allowed to make inquiries or changes to an account. The primary customer may request an additional person dwelling in the unit be listed on the service account only if proper identification and proof of tenancy is provided.

## **Deposits**

You may be required to make a deposit to connect utility services. Residential deposits are calculated based on 2 months of an estimated annual bill. Non-residential deposits are calculated in accordance to COMAR 20.30.01. If a deposit is required and a good payment record is established for a period of 12 months for residential customers, or 48 months for commercial customers, we will promptly apply the deposit, with interest, to your account. If a good payment record has not been established, the deposit will be retained. In the event an existing customer's credit becomes unsatisfactory, a deposit will be required. In addition, in certain circumstances, re-establishment of credit may be required of non-residential customers. All deposits, with interest, are returned when service is cancelled and all amounts due to Easton Utilities have been paid.

## RENEWABLES/SOLAR APPLICATION

Any Customer who seeks to connect under the Service Classification of Biomass, Solar and Wind Electric Generation Service must submit a completed Interconnection Participation Application to the Company, in writing to get required approval to construct. The eligible customer-generator shall not be connected to the Company's system unless it is approved. The system must conform to the National Electrical Code (NEC), the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), Underwriters Laboratories (UL) and all applicable codes of the local public authorities. The Customer must obtain, at their expense, all necessary permits, inspections and approvals required by the local public authorities before the eligible customer-generator is connected to the Company's electric system. The eligible customer-generator shall have adequate protection which provides safety for personnel; affords adequate protection against damage to the Company's system or its Customer's property; and prevents any interference with the Company's supply of service to other customers.

## GAS AND ELECTRIC METERS

### **Meter Readers**

Meters are read on or around the same date each month by Easton Utilities meter readers. Our meter readers wear Easton Utilities uniforms and carry identification cards that will be displayed upon request.

### **Unscheduled Meter Readings**

When a customer requests a meter reading of a standard meter on an unscheduled meter reading date, the Customer shall be charged up to \$50 per meter, per occurrence. For a nonscheduled meter reading of an electric demand meter the customer shall be charged on a time and material basis per meter not to exceed \$100 per meter, per occurrence.

### **Accurate Devices**

Meters are rugged, highly accurate devices that record the consumption of gas and electricity. Our meters are monitored regularly under guidelines established by the Maryland Public Service Commission to ensure they are operating accurately.

## **Requests for Meter Test**

Upon request by a Customer (limited to one every 18 months), Easton Utilities shall test the Customer's meter. If tests of meters at the Customer's request are performed more frequently than once in 18 months, Easton Utilities shall charge the Customer up to \$50 for testing a standard meter. For testing an electric demand meter, the charge shall be rendered on a time and material basis per demand meter tested, not to exceed \$500 per demand meter tested. No charge shall be made for testing meters which upon test are found to exceed the allowable accuracy limits.

## **Keep Your Meter & Transformer Clear**

Shrubs and vegetation hamper our meter readers from taking accurate readings and can make periodic maintenance difficult. Planting such items near or around the meter and transformer poses a safety hazard. Please keep a 3-foot clearance zone around the utility meters and 6-foot clearance zone around electric transformers. If you fail to keep a clearance zone, Easton Utilities will create one at your expense.

## **Estimated Bills**

If your meter stops or an Easton Utilities meter reader is unable to read the Customer's meter, Easton Utilities may estimate the Customer's usage and render an estimated bill.

## **Inspection for Inactive Services**

For your safety and that of our employees, prior to service being restored, Easton Utilities requires an inspection for services that have been inactive for one year or longer. Inspections are carried out by the Town of Easton. For information, call 410-822-2525.

## **Read Your Meter**

We encourage you to read your meter to verify the accuracy of your bills and to monitor your efforts to conserve electricity and natural gas.

# **BILLING**

## **Billing Procedures**

All electric and gas meters are read monthly. Customers are billed approximately one week after their meter is read.



## **Seasonal Rate Difference**

Demand for electricity is typically higher in the summer and winter than in the spring and fall, as is the cost of meeting such demand. Therefore, residential utility bills reflect a seasonal difference.

## **Important Notice for Property Owners**

If you own and occupy real property supplied with service by Easton Utilities, you should be aware, as stated in the [Charter and Code of Easton, Maryland](#), all amounts billed for such service (except cable television & internet) constitute a lien upon your property.

## **Verification of Billing Accuracy**

Current rate schedules can be found in our service tariffs, which are available on our website [www.eastonutilities.com](http://www.eastonutilities.com). If you have a question about your bill, we will investigate at your request and advise you of our findings.

## **Returned Payment Charge**

Any payments given to Easton Utilities that are returned unpaid by a customer's bank will result in an additional charge of up to \$50 per occurrence.

## **Alternate Payment Plan**

Customers may request an Alternate Payment Plan (APP) as an optional means for payment of service delinquent charges and to avoid service termination resulting from those delinquent charges. APP agreements shall be made through an authorized Easton Utilities representative. The unpaid balance amount of the agreement is not subject to the provisions of the late payment charge. Failure of the Customer to meet the conditions of an APP, including prompt payment of the current bill, shall constitute a breach of agreement and entitles Easton Utilities to pursue collection and termination procedures pursuant to the applicable rules and regulations of the Public Service Commission of Maryland.

## **Late Payment Charge**

Easton Utilities' bills are payable on or before the due date shown on your bill. Late payment charges of 1.5% of the unpaid balance will be applied to bills the following month. The cumulative total late payment charges added to the original unpaid amount will not exceed 5%.

## **Bill Extender**

Customers who receive supplemental security income, disability payments, or other financial aid through government sponsored assistance programs may request to have their account noted to accommodate when those funds are received by calling the Customer Service Center at 410-822-6110.

## **CUSTOMER CHARGES**

### **Maryland Environmental Surcharge**

In accordance with Maryland state law, an environmental surcharge is imposed on all electricity generated in Maryland. The Public Service Commission determines the applicable surcharge for each fiscal year. The Environmental Surcharge is billed at a set rate per kilowatt-hour and is stated separately on your bill.

### **Universal Service Program**

In accordance with Maryland law the Universal Service Charge is billed monthly to all electric customers. The Universal Service Program Fund is part of the Electric Customer Choice Act of 1999 to assist low-income electric customers with arrearage retirement, bill assistance and weatherization programs.

### **Energy/Purchased Gas Charges**

The cost of fuel used in generating electricity, the cost of purchased energy and the cost of gas delivered by a pipeline changes constantly. The amount you pay is the cost to us, without any markup or profit, and is adjusted monthly. Revenue, less related costs associated with power sold in the marketplace by Easton Utilities' generators, will be used to reduce the cost to electric customers. Every effort is made to purchase energy from suppliers at the lowest cost, and to operate our plants efficiently. For electricity, the Energy Charge is shown per kilowatt-hour (kWh) and the total charges are shown separately on your bill. The Purchased Gas Charge (PGC) is shown per CCF (one CCF equals 100 cubic feet) and appears on bills for gas customers. These charges reflect gas purchase costs, without markup, and are adjusted monthly. Calculations on which the Energy Charge and PGC rates are based are filed monthly with the Public Service Commission for review and approval.

## **Electric and Gas Rate Schedules**

Electric customers are billed under one of the following rate schedules:

Residential Service - available for all classes of domestic service within the Easton Utilities territory for electric service. Applicable to one-family residences or one-family apartments.

General Service - Small - This rate is available to any customer having an average monthly maximum measured demand of 250 kW or less in the preceding calendar year.

General Service - Large - This rate is available to any customer having an average monthly maximum measured demand of greater than 250 kW in the preceding calendar year.

General Service Primary - This rate is available for three-phase service at standard Company primary voltage at or below 25,000 volts. The standard voltage available depends upon the location, character and size of Customer's load.

Gas customers are billed under one of the following rate schedules:

Residential Service - available for firm gas service to customers with a separate meter in a single-family dwelling or individual apartment.

Commercial Service - available for firm gas service for customers for non-domestic purposes with average monthly usage less than 2,000 CCF.

Large Commercial & Industrial Service - available for firm gas service for large commercial customers and/or industrial purposes whose average monthly consumption is 2,000 CCF or greater.

## **Solar Service (Net Metering)**

Customers utilizing owner provided solar power are billed according to the rules established by the State of Maryland, the Maryland Public Commission and COMAR. Eligible customers will receive a check each May equivalent to the amount of all net excess electric commodity produced during the previous 12 months ending in April. Easton Utilities is required to track and include the kilowatt-hour amount of excess generated electric on the monthly bill.

## **PAYMENT OPTIONS**

### **Automatic Payment Plan**

Automatic payment is one of the most convenient ways to pay your monthly utility bill. Your bill is paid on the bill's due date by automatic funds transferred from your bank account or credit/debit card. For more details, please ask a Customer Service Representative, or sign up online or through our mobile app.

### **Online Payments**

Easton Utilities offers online bill payment for customers who use MasterCard, Visa, or electronic check. To register and pay bills, visit [www.eastonutilities.com](http://www.eastonutilities.com). Customers who make payments on the website or through the mobile app after a disconnect for non-payment will need to notify the Customer Service Center at 410-822-6110 to be reconnected.

### **By Mail**

If you choose to pay by mail, please send check or money order only. DO NOT send cash. When paying by mail, please allow for possible postal delays and be sure to include the bottom portion of the bill with your payment. Easton Utilities is not responsible for U.S. Postal Service delays.

### **In Person**

Customers may make payment in person at our Customer Service Center, 201 North Washington Street, Easton. A drive-through window is located at the rear of the service center for customer convenience. Easton Utilities accepts cash, check, Visa and MasterCard. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8 am - 4:30 pm (except holidays).

### **By Phone**

Customers may make payments with MasterCard, Visa, or electronic check by calling our Customer Service Center at 410-822-6110 Monday through Friday, 8 am - 4:30 pm (except holidays).

### **After Hours**

Customers may use our Quick Payment Slot, located near the drive-through window, to drop off your payments after business hours. Please include the bottom portion of your bill with your payment. DO NOT leave cash payments in this location.

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

### Budget Billing Plan

Customers may spread utility costs out evenly throughout the year by enrolling in the Budget Billing Plan. You may enroll any time after having service for at least 12 months. Contact the Customer Service Center at 410-822-6110 for more information. This service is available to all Residential Service customers and General Service – Small (electric only) customers. General Service – Small customers may only enroll in the billing months of April, May, October, and November.

## SERVICE TERMINATION

### Disconnection

We may terminate service for the following reasons:

- Nonpayment of utility bills or deposit
- Failure to allow us access to our equipment
- Nonpayment of a special arrangement
- Tampering with utility owned lines, pipes or meters
- Any hazardous condition determined by Easton Utilities

We prefer not to disconnect service to a customer and will do everything possible to avoid disconnecting service. If you are having trouble paying your bills, please let us know. Payment arrangements may be made prior to service disconnection. Usually, we give customers two weeks advance notice before we disconnect a utility service. However, if a customer fails to notify us of an address change or fraudulently obtains service, we will disconnect service in accordance with Maryland Public Service Commission regulations.

### Disconnection Exceptions

Customers who are elderly, handicapped, seriously ill, rely on life support, or who have any existing condition for which a termination of service would be a threat to life, health or safety, must notify us of such conditions prior to termination. You will be required to provide proper certification of such condition. Between November 1 and March 31, we will only disconnect a service for non-payment of bills after we certify to the Maryland Public Service Commission a proposed cutoff does not threaten the health of the occupants.

## Reconnection of Service

If service is terminated for non-payment, reconnection can be arranged with payment at the Customer Service Center during business hours. Upon payment of all charges and reconnection fees, service will be restored within 24 hours. Disconnection of service at the transformer will be up to \$125. Customer may be required to re-establish credit by paying a deposit.

	<u>Reconnection Fee</u>
Monday - Friday 8 am - 4 pm	up to \$50
Monday - Friday 4 pm - 7 pm	up to \$75
Weekends & holidays 8 am - 7 pm	up to \$75
<b>No electric reconnections 7 pm - 8 am</b>	
<b>No gas reconnections 11 pm - 8 am</b>	

At the Company's option, the Customer may avoid service termination for non-payment of bills by making a payment by check or money order for the past due balance due to a Company representative at the customer's premises. In addition to payment of the past due balance, there shall be a fee per trip to the premises for collection of payments/reconnection. Should the customer not have full payment in hand, the Company representative will not perform the reconnect. If a check used for payment of a service termination or reconnection is returned by the bank, the service is subject to disconnection without further notification.

## LIMITED INCOME PROGRAMS

### Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)

MEAP provides financial assistance in meeting the immediate home energy needs for low-income Maryland residents under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance act.

### Utility Service Protection Program (USPP)

All customers eligible for assistance from MEAP are eligible for participation in USPP. USPP allows utility customers to enter into an even monthly payment based on the household's energy consumption for the previous year minus the MEAP benefit and divided by 12.

### Electric Universal Service Program (EUSP)

The Electric Universal Service Program is a state program designed to help low-income customers pay the electric portion of their bills.

For more information on MEAP, USPP and EUSP, contact:

Neighborhood Service Center, Inc.  
126 Port Street  
Easton, MD 21601  
410-763-6745 (Main)  
410-822-5015 (Emergency Assistance)

*For a list of other agencies who offer assistance, please contact Customer Service.*

## OTHER INFORMATION

### **Complaint Resolution**

If you have a question or complaint about your bill, you may contact the Easton Utilities Customer Service Department by calling 410-822-6110 or by visiting our offices. If you have a question or problem with your Electric or Gas service that has not been resolved to your satisfaction by Easton Utilities, you may contact the Maryland Public Service Commission at the following address:

Office of External Relations  
Maryland Public Service Commission  
6 St. Paul Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202-6806  
800-492-0474 or 410-767-8028  
Fax: 410-333-6844  
Email: [mpsc@psc.state.md.us](mailto:mpsc@psc.state.md.us)  
[www.psc.state.md.us](http://www.psc.state.md.us)

Hours: 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday (except holidays).

### **Customer Privacy**

All customer records are strictly confidential. Without the customer's expressed written consent, Easton Utilities will not share customer information with any person or organization other than the customer unless legally bound to do so. Under no circumstances will Easton Utilities sell or otherwise distribute its customer lists. To protect our customers' personal identity information, Easton Utilities requires all customers to provide two forms of government issued ID, including a photo ID.

### **Employee Identification**

All Easton Utilities employees are required to carry a photo identification card. If anyone comes to your home or office claiming to be an Easton Utilities employee, ask to see his or her identification card.

# IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

## Easton Utilities

Customer Service

410-822-6110

Email: [info@eastonutilities.com](mailto:info@eastonutilities.com)

## Reporting Outages/Emergencies

410-822-6110 (24 Hours)

Online at [www.eastonutilities.com](http://www.eastonutilities.com) - My Account

Mobile App - Easton Utilities My Account

## Miss Utility

800-441-8355 or dial 8-1-1

## Neighborhood Service Center

410-763-6745 (Main)

410-822-5015 (Emergency Assistance)

## Maryland Public Service Commission

Office of External Relations

800-492-0474

410-767-8028

Fax: 410-333-6844

Email: [mpsc@psc.state.md.us](mailto:mpsc@psc.state.md.us)

[www.psc.state.md.us](http://www.psc.state.md.us)



**Life. Made better.™**

410-822-6110 phone • 410-822-0743 fax  
[info@eastonutilities.com](mailto:info@eastonutilities.com) • [eastonutilities.com](http://eastonutilities.com)

201 North Washington Street | Easton, Maryland 21601