



# New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **State and Utilities Work Together to Ensure No Residential Electric Shut-offs During Heat Wave**

*Program prevents electric disconnects for most needy customers during heat wave*

(NEWARK, NJ) -- The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBPUB) would like to remind the public that electric utilities are prohibited from disconnecting service to eligible residential customers during periods of excessive heat. If the forecasted temperature for any time during a 48-hour period is 95 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, then residential customers protected under the Winter Termination Program (WTP) will not have their electric service shut off by State regulation.

This protection, which is extended to those customers eligible for the WTP, was established by the Board in 2004. The protection prohibits electric utility companies from shutting off residential services during a heat wave above 95 degrees Fahrenheit, and relies upon national weather forecasts to judge the severity of the upcoming weather.

“We established this regulation during my tenure at the Board due to our concerns that public health and safety could be compromised if electric service is denied during a time of excessive heat,” said President Fox. “Through this regulation, our most vulnerable residents are protected from the harm that can result if electric service is shut off during a heat wave.

“In addition to these regulations, we have asked the electric utilities to voluntarily expand beyond the scope of the shut-off ban and refrain from shutting off **any** residential customers during the heat wave. In recognition of the potential harm that such an action can cause during a heat wave, all the utilities, including PSE&G, JCP&L, Rockland Electric, and Atlantic City Electric, today agreed not to shut off any residential customers while the heat remains excessive.”

To further enhance policies surrounding shut-offs during excessive heat, the Board is considering expanding this protection during a heat wave by lowering the minimum temperature for this protection to 90 degrees (down from the 95) at the Board’s scheduled Wednesday, July 11<sup>th</sup> agenda meeting.

To beat the heat and save money on your cooling bill, the NJBPUB recommends residents:

- **Dress for the heat.** Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing. Light colors will reflect away some of the sun's energy. It is also a good idea to wear hats or to use an umbrella.
- **Drink water.** Carry water or juice with you and drink continuously even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine, which dehydrate the body.

- **Eat small meals and eat more often.** Avoid foods that are high in protein which increase metabolic heat.
- **Slow down.** Avoid strenuous activity. If you must do strenuous activity, do it during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m.
- **Spend more time in air-conditioned places.** Air conditioning in homes and other buildings markedly reduces danger from the heat. If you cannot afford an air conditioner, spend some time each day (during hot weather) in an air conditioned place, like the local public library or at a shopping center.
- **Take regular breaks** when engaged in physical activity on warm days. Take time out to find a cool place. If you recognize that you, or someone else, are showing the signs of a heat-related illness, stop activity and find a cool place. Remember, have fun, but stay cool!
- **Keep drapes closed and shades drawn.** The amount of energy required to cool your home will be considerably less;
- **Make a special effort to check on neighbors,** especially seniors and those with special needs.
- **Pets suffer from heat waves, too.** Keep them cool and hydrated.

For customers who are having or anticipate difficulties with their electric bills, the NJBPU urges them to contact their electric company as soon as possible at one of the following toll free numbers:

UTILITY CUSTOMER TOLL FREE NUMBERS	
PSE&G	1- 800-436-7734
Jersey Central Power and Light	1- 800-962-0383
Atlantic City Electric	1- 800-642-3780
Rockland	1- 877-434-4100

A number of energy assistance programs may still have funding available. For more information, please go to the NJBPU web site at: [www.bpu.state.nj.us](http://www.bpu.state.nj.us) and click on the link for energy assistance programs, or call the NJBPU's Division of Customer Assistance at 1-800-624-0241.

\* To be eligible for the WTP, residential customers must meet any one of the following criteria:

1. Recipients of benefits under the Lifeline Credit Program;
2. Recipients of benefits of benefits under the Federal Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), or certified as eligible therefore under standards set by the New Jersey Department of Human Services;
3. Recipients of Work First NJ Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF);
4. Recipients of Federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
5. Recipients of Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD);
6. Recipients of Work First NJ/General Assistance (GA);
7. Recipients of Universal Service Fund (USF); or
8. Persons unable to pay their utility because of circumstances beyond their control -- including unemployment, illness, medically related expenses, recent death of a spouse and any other circumstances which might cause financial hardship.

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*The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities (NJBP) is a state agency and regulatory authority mandated to ensure safe, adequate, and proper utility services at reasonable rates for New Jersey customers. Critical services regulated by the NJBP include natural gas, electricity, water, wastewater, telecommunications and cable television. The Board has general oversight responsibility for monitoring utility service, responding to consumer complaints, and investigating utility accidents. To find out more about NJBP, visit our web site at [www.bpu.state.nj.us](http://www.bpu.state.nj.us)*