

DATE: May 2, 2017

TO: Subscribers

SUGGESTED DISTRIBUTION: Commissioners, TA Directors, HEAP Coordinators, Staff
Development Coordinators

FROM: Barbara C. Guinn, Executive Deputy Commissioner
Employment and Income Support Programs

SUBJECT: National Grid's Procedures for Elderly, Blind, or Disabled Household Shut-Offs

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

CONTACT PERSON: Temporary Assistance Bureau at (518) 474-9344, ext. 4-9344

The purpose of this GIS is to inform Social Services Districts (districts) that National Grid (NG) has informed the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) that as the cold weather period ended April 15th, 2017, some NG customers who owe arrears and are identified as Elderly, Blind, or Disabled (EBD) will begin receiving 72 hour shut off notices. Elderly, Blind, and Disabled households are designated when the residential customer of record is certified with NG as blind, disabled, or 62 years of age or older, and all remaining residents of the household are 62 years of age or older, 18 years of age or younger, or blind or disabled.

In accordance with the Home Energy Fair Practices Act (HEFPA), Public Service Commission (PSC)-regulated utility companies must attempt to contact by telephone EBD customers threatened with a utility disconnection at least 72 hours prior to service termination to devise a plan that arranges for payment of bills. If telephone contact is unsuccessful, in person contact must be attempted.

Once a 72-hour notice is given to an EBD customer, NG must also send an LDSS-2338 referral to the appropriate district, and the customer will be given a 15 business day suspend to work out an arrangement with NG and/or to apply for assistance from the district. Unless NG is notified by the district (within the 15 business days) that acceptable payment or other arrangements have been made, NG will terminate service.

As a result of these potential shut offs, districts may experience an increase in inquiries and office visits. Additionally, districts may see an increased number of LDSS-2338 referrals for these households as required by HEFPA.

When a district receives an LDSS-2338 referral for an EBD household, the district must, at a minimum, send a letter to that referred EBD household as described in 93 ADM-26. If the utility referral specifically states that the customer is blind, the district must take appropriate steps to ensure that district Adult Protective Services is involved to coordinate applications for financial assistance to continue or to restore service.

For information on procedures followed by utilities when terminating service to an EBD household, on required actions of districts when an LDSS-2338 is received, and on other district implications of HEFPA, see 93 ADM-26.

For information on processing Temporary Assistance (TA) requests for energy emergencies, see 16TA/DC055.

For information on meeting the emergency/immediate needs of TA applicants/recipients, see 02 ADM-02.