

## Health Advisory

Medical Certifications to Prevent Residential Utility Service Shutoffs  
September 23, 2022

### SUMMARY POINTS

- Identify patients with serious illness or whose physical or mental condition will be worsened if they do not have utility service.
- Complete medical certifications.
- Educate patients about utility assistance.

This Health Advisory addresses medical professionals' ability to assist patients in danger of having their energy utility services shut off and to restore service to those who have been shut off. It also supplements the Health Advisory issued on July 11, 2022, regarding medical certifications to prevent and restore water shutoffs.

Water, heating, and cooling are essential to health: To manage existing medical conditions, and to prevent new ones from occurring. The Philadelphia Department of Public Health (PDPH) supports use of medical certifications to prevent utility shutoffs and to restore service in any situation in which a patient's physical or mental well-being could be compromised by losing gas, electricity, or water service. Medical certifications provide protection for 30 days and can be renewed for an additional 30 days. Paired with referrals to longer-lasting assistance, medical certifications can prevent many adverse medical consequences.

The Philadelphia Water Department (PWD), Philadelphia Gas Works (PGW) and PECO all use this standard: The determination about whether a consumer or member of the household has a serious illness or a medical condition that will be worsened if there is a loss of utility service at the residence resides entirely with the physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant and not with the utility.

#### Medical Certification Forms:

- [PWD Medical Certification Form](#)
- Both PGW and PECO accept the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's (PUC) [Standard Medical Certification Form](#).

#### A medical certification need not appear on this Standard Form, but should contain the following information:

1. The name and address of the customer or applicant in whose name the account is registered.
2. The name and address of the patient and the relationship to the customer or applicant.
3. The anticipated length of the affliction/medical condition.
4. The name, office address, and telephone number of the certifying physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.
5. Signature of the certifying physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.

Additional information about preventing utility service shutoffs by PWD, PGW, and PECO is available at:

- PWD: [www.phila.gov/services/water-gas-utilities/water-shutoffs/prevent-water-shutoffs/](http://www.phila.gov/services/water-gas-utilities/water-shutoffs/prevent-water-shutoffs/)
- PGW: <https://www.pgworks.com/uploads/pdfs/MCGF.pdf>
- PECO: <https://www.peco.com/MyAccount/CustomerSupport/Pages/CARESServices.aspx>

Customers can also call to set up payment plans or for more information:

- PWD: 215-685-6300
- PGW: 215-235-1000
- PECO: 800-744-7040

If you have questions about any of the above, please contact PDPH Public Policy Advisor Ben Hartung at [Benjamin.Hartung@phila.gov](mailto:Benjamin.Hartung@phila.gov).

For urgent utility problems such as when utilities have already been cut off, Community Legal Services offers in-person intake at their Center City and North Philadelphia offices as well as telephone intake.

- Call 215-981-3700 on Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday between 9am-12pm.
- Walk-In:
  - 1424 Chestnut Street on Monday and Wednesday between 9am-12pm
  - 1410 W. Erie Avenue on Monday and Wednesday between 8:30am-12pm

See: <https://clsphila.org/highlights/cls-is-open-for-live-legal-help> for more information.