



What is the PUC doing to help Texans experiencing economic hardship due to the February 2021 Winter Weather Event?

On February 21, 2021 the Public Utility Commission of Texas responded to the governor's extreme weather disaster declaration with a plan to grant exceptions to certain rules that affect investor-owned utilities (IOUs) and their customers in Texas.

Who are these actions intended to help?

These efforts are intended to help those Texans in genuine distress because of the extreme weather event, and that are experiencing unusually high bills or usage during the month of February. In some instances, your water or sewer utility may have also been unable to read your meter due to the storm.

How are Water and Sewer Utility Customers Affected?

On February 21, 2021, the Commission ordered PUC-regulated water and sewer utilities across the state to immediately suspend disconnections for non-payment. These utilities were also ordered to suspend charging late fees or interest on deferred payment plans during this time frame. On March 5, 2021, the Commission issued a subsequent order to reinstate a utility's authority to charge late fees or interest on deferred payment plans. The order suspending disconnections for non-payment, however, remains in effect. These orders can be found at [51812RuleExceptions.pdf](#).

Does the disconnection for non-payment directive apply to communities, municipalities, districts, and non-profit Water Supply Corporations (WSC) that provide retail water & sewer utility service?

No. The Commission's order only applies to IOUs located outside the corporate limits of a municipality. The governing body or elected board of a county, municipality, district or non-profit water supply and sewer service corporation (WSC) is responsible for making the business decisions regarding their retail public utility related to the disconnection of service for nonpayment as a result of the winter weather event.

How should counties, municipalities, districts, and non-profit WSCs handle water and sewer utility customer issues related to the 2021 Winter Weather Event?

We encourage these entities to review the Commission's order on disconnections for nonpayment during the February 2021 Winter Weather Event. Many of these entities have decided to not disconnect customers for non-payment during this time; however, we have not heard from all of them. If you are one of their customers, you are encouraged to contact them directly with your questions and concerns.

I'm a customer who can't pay my water bill for February 2021. What should I do?

You will continue to receive a bill and accrue a balance from your retail public water and sewer utility during this time frame. If you are unable to pay your bill in full, immediately contact your water and sewer utility provider and ask for a deferred payment plan for the portion of the bill you are unable to pay. If you feel your February usage is not accurate, you may dispute the bill with your retail public water or sewer utility and pay the portion of your bill you are able to pay.

Can I be charged a late fee for being unable to pay all or a portion of my bill during this crisis?

Customers that receive retail water or sewer service from an IOU can be charged a late fee



beginning March 5, 2021. We recommend that you talk to your water or sewer provider to establish a payment plan.

What if my Investor Owned Utility (IOU) is also having a difficult time paying bills during the February 2021 Winter Weather Event?

If you represent an IOU having a difficult time paying your own electric bill, first contact your electric provider to request a payment plan. Then contact the PUC's Department of Utility Outreach (DUO) at DUO@puc.texas.gov. You may need to apply for a rate increase with the Commission. (Requirements for requesting a rate and tariff change differ according to the size of your utility.)