

## **MEDICAL CERTIFICATE GUIDANCE**

### **Guidance for Consumers:**

If you are behind on your utility bills, you may be able to avoid shutoff or obtain restoration of public utility service if there is a medical emergency in your household. A medical emergency exists if you or a member of your household are seriously ill or have a medical condition that will be worsened if you do not have public utility service.

To use a medical certificate to avoid termination or restore service, you or someone in your household must be a customer of the public utility. After your service is terminated or discontinued, you remain a customer of a public utility for 30 days. After 30 days have passed, the public utility considers you to be an applicant for new services. Once you revert to applicant status you are no longer a customer, and your medical certificate may not be enough to restore service. A payment may be required with the medical certificate in that case.

Below are steps for consumers regarding how to obtain a medical certificate and how to use a medical certificate:

1. Contact the utility and tell them you have a medical emergency, and that you are seeking a medical certificate.
2. Contact your medical professional and ask them to complete the medical certificate form. You can use the Public Utility Commission's Standard Medical Certificate Form, but it is not required. You can use a form provided by the utility or your medical professional can simply provide the required information (listed below) in writing.
3. You or your medical professional should fax or e-mail the form directly to the utility. Contact your utility to ask where the form should be sent.

A licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician's assistant must *sign* the medical certificate and include their *license number* on the medical certificate. The following information from the licensed physician, physician assistant, or a nurse practitioner is required *in writing* on a medical certificate:

1. The name and address of the customer or applicant in whose name the account is registered.
2. The name and address of the afflicted person/person with medical condition 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.

Once a medical certificate is accepted by a public utility, a pending shutoff must be postponed for a maximum of 30 days. The shutoff can then be postponed for a maximum of 30 days and renewed for additional 30-day periods. *However, you still have the responsibility to pay your current bills or your budget billing amount during the postponement and any renewal thereof.*

If your service has already been shut off, you may provide a medical certificate to the public utility to have service restored within 24 hours. If your service has been terminated for more than 30 days, you will revert to applicant status. A payment may be required with the medical certificate if you are an applicant seeking restoration and you still have an outstanding balance due.

A single medical certification will result in postponement or restoration of service for a maximum of 30 days. If you do not pay your current bills or budget bill amount, the utility is not required to accept more than two medical certification renewals.

*Should you need further financial assistance beyond what is afforded by a medical certificate and available renewals, the Commission urges you to contact your utility. Your utility can evaluate your eligibility for additional assistance programs. Additional financial assistance may also be available through federal or state programs. Please call Pennsylvania 211 by dialing “211” or visit <https://www.pa211.org/> for other types of assistance available.*

### **Guidance for Medical Professionals:**

Consumers may be able to avoid shutoff or obtain restoration of public utility service if there is a medical emergency in the household. A medical emergency exists if the consumer or a member of the consumer’s household is seriously ill or has a medical condition that will be worsened if the consumer does not have utility service.

The determination of whether a medical condition qualifies for the purposes of this section resides entirely with the physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant and not with the public utility.

A single medical certificate will result in the postponement or restoration of service for a maximum of 30 days. Consumers have the responsibility to pay current bills or the budget billing amount during the postponement. The medical certificate can be renewed for additional 30-day periods.

Medical professionals may provide a medical certificate to the utility directly, or to the customer for the customer’s submission to the utility. A licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician’s assistant must *sign* the medical certificate and include their

*license number* on the medical certificate. For a medical certificate to be accepted by the public utility, the licensed physician, physician assistant, or a nurse practitioner must provide *in writing* on the medical certificate:

1. The name and address of the customer or applicant in whose name the account is registered.
2. The name and address of the afflicted person/person with medical condition 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.

This medical certificate information can be provided to a utility in any written format. The Public Utility Commission provides a Standard Medical Certificate Form on its website, [www.puc.pa.gov](http://www.puc.pa.gov). However, no particular form is required.