

9.00 BILLING

9.01 Amount of Gas Used

Readings of all meters used for determining charges to customers shall be made each month unless otherwise authorized by the Commission. The term "month" for meter reading and billing purposes is the period between successive meter reading dates which shall be as nearly as practicable to thirty (30) day intervals. When CenterPoint Energy is unable to gain access to a meter, it shall leave a meter reading form for the customer.

CenterPoint Energy may permit the customer to supply meter readings, providing a CenterPoint Energy representative reads the meter at least once every twelve (12) months, when there is a change in customers or when requested by the customer.

If the billing period is longer or shorter than the normal billing period by more than five (5) days, the monthly customer charge on the bill shall be prorated on a daily basis.

9.02 Estimated Meter Readings

When access to a meter cannot be gained and the customer does not supply a meter reading in time for the billing operation, an estimated bill will be rendered. Estimated bills are based on the customer's normal consumption for a corresponding period.

CenterPoint Energy will regularly schedule estimated monthly meter readings throughout the year, but not over four (4) times in any twelve (12) month period. Only in unusual cases will more than two (2) consecutive estimated bills be rendered, unless the customer fails to provide meter readings for an inaccessible meter.

9.03 Non-Registering Meter

When a meter fails to register the quantity of gas consumed, CenterPoint Energy will change the meter and render a bill for the period of non-registration based on either of the following methods:

- 1) Estimation of the gas consumed on the basis of past usage during a similar period and under similar conditions; or
- 2) Estimation of the gas consumed on the basis of usage registered by the new meter during a subsequent period.

9.04 Slow Meter

Whenever a meter is found to have an average error of more than two percent (2%) slow, CenterPoint Energy may bill the customer for the amount the test indicates the customer has been undercharged for the period of inaccuracy. The period shall not exceed the last six (6) months the meter was in service, unless the date can be established with reasonable certainty in which case the undercharge shall be computed from that date. No undercharge shall be computed for a period to exceed one (1) year unless extenuating circumstances dictate. The average error for a meter shall be one-half the algebraic sum of the error at full rated flow plus the error at check flow.

9.05 Fast Meter

Whenever a meter is found to have an average error of more than two (2%) percent fast, the customer will receive a credit to the account or a refund for the period of inaccuracy. The period shall not exceed the last six (6) months the meter was in service, unless the date can be established with reasonable certainty in which case the refund shall be computed from that date. No credit or refund shall be computed for a period to exceed one (1) year unless extenuating circumstances dictate. The average error for a meter shall be one-half the algebraic sum of the error at full rated flow plus the error at check flow.

9.06 Other Billing Corrections

When a customer has been overcharged/undercharged as a result of an incorrect reading of the meter, incorrect application of the rate schedule, incorrect connection of the meter, or other similar reasons, the amount of the overcharge/undercharge shall be adjusted, refunded, or credited to the customer.

- 1) Remedy for Overcharge: CenterPoint Energy shall calculate the difference between the amount collected for service and the amount the Company should have collected for service, plus interest, for the period beginning three years before the date of discovery. Interest will be calculated as prescribed by Minnesota Statutes §325E.02(b). If the recalculated bills indicate that more than \$1 is due an existing customer, or \$2 is due a person no longer a customer of the utility, the full amount of the calculated difference between the amount paid and the recalculated amount shall be refunded to the customer. Refunds to an existing customer may be in cash or credit on a bill. Credits shall be shown separately and identified. If a refund is due a person no longer a customer of the utility, the utility shall mail to the customer's last known address either the refund or a notice that the customer has three months in which to request a refund from the utility.
- 2) Remedy for Undercharge: CenterPoint Energy shall calculate the difference between the amount collected for service and the amount the Company should have collected for service for the period beginning one year before the date of discovery. If the recalculated bills indicate that the amount due the utility exceeds \$10, the utility may bill the customer for the amount due. CenterPoint Energy must not bill for any undercharge incurred after the date of a customer inquiry or complaint if the utility failed to begin investigating the matter within a reasonable time and the inquiry or complaint ultimately resulted in the discovery of the undercharge. The billing for undercharges shall be separated from the regular bill and the charges explained in detail.

CenterPoint Energy shall offer a payment agreement to customers who have been undercharged if no culpable conduct by the customer or resident of the customer's household caused the undercharge. The agreement must cover a period equal to the time over which the undercharge occurred or a different time period that is mutually agreeable to the customer and the utility, except that the duration of a payment agreement offered by the Company to a customer whose household income is at or below 50 percent of state median household income must consider the financial circumstances of the customer's household. No interest or delinquency fee may be charged as part of an undercharge agreement under this paragraph.

- 3) Exception if error date is known: If the date the error occurred can be fixed with reasonable certainty, the remedy shall be calculated on the basis of payments for service after that date, but in no event for a period beginning more than three years before the discovery of an overcharge or one year before the discovery of an undercharge.

9.07 Adjustments of Estimates

An estimated bill, followed by a subsequent meter reading, may be adjusted by:

- 1) Adjusting the bill following the estimate. Where a customer credit results, the account will show a credit unless the customer requests a refund, or
- 2) Issuing a corrected bill.