**Section 280.90 Estimated Bills**

a) Intent: This Section describes the utility's responsibilities to obtain actual readings of the customer's meter and the process by which a utility may issue an estimated bill to a customer when the utility is unable to obtain an actual reading or a customer reading.

b) Utility Meter Reading:

1) A utility shall perform an actual reading of a customer's meter at least every second billing period unless the utility's attempt to do so is prevented.

2) A utility shall perform an actual reading of a customer's meter every billing period if that meter is equipped with a remote reading device, unless the utility effort to do so is prevented.

3) When the utility's attempt to read the meter fails, it shall record the date, time of day, utility personnel involved, and reason for the failure. The record shall be retained for a period of two years. In addition, its field representative making the visit to read the meter shall leave a door tag at the premises. The door tag shall indicate when the utility representative was there and provide the utility's contact information for the customer to set up an appointment with the utility to gain access to the meter. If the customer's meter is equipped with a remote reading device to obtain a reading without the presence of field personnel on the customer's property, then the utility may mail or use other means to deliver written notification (may include electronic written notification to customers who have elected electronic billing methods) of the failed reading to the customer in lieu of leaving a door hanger. The utility may contact a customer by telephone to provide notice of a failed reading, provided that written notification must be sent if the utility fails to reach the customer directly or successfully leave a voice message.

4) A reading provided by a remote reading system or device shall be considered an actual reading.

5) A reading provided by a Commission certified meter service provider in compliance with the utility's tariff shall be considered an actual reading.

6) If a utility issues two consecutive estimated bills to a customer, the utility shall contact the customer to resolve the reason for the consecutive estimated bills, so that the utility may obtain an actual reading of the meter or a customer reading. If the utility is unable to contact the customer, it shall send a letter advising the customer of the utility's need for contact on the matter. The utility shall make a record of each effort to contact the customer.

c) Customer Meter Reading:

1) A customer reading of the meter provided to the utility shall satisfy the actual reading requirement in subsection (b)(1). However, a utility shall not require a customer to provide customer readings when the customer can provide access to the meter for utility personnel.

2) After six consecutive months of customer provided readings, a utility shall take an actual reading of the meter in accordance with subsections (b)(1) and (2).

d) Meter Readings for Beginning and Ending Service: Unless a utility has taken an actual reading of the meter within the past 60 days, it shall take an actual reading of the meter as prescribed in this subsection (d). The utility may satisfy the requirements of this subsection (d) on the day before or the day after the beginning or ending date if that date falls upon a non-business day of the utility.

1) On the beginning date of service for a new customer, so long as the new customer has provided the utility with at least five days advance notice of the start date, and so long as the customer provides the utility with access to the meter;

2) On the ending date of service for a customer who is stopping service, so long as the customer has provided the utility with at least five days advance notice of the end date, and so long as the customer provides the utility with access to the meter.

e) Estimated Bill Formula: A utility's formula for estimating customer meter readings shall be filed in the utility's tariff.

f) Bill Labeling:

1) A bill based upon an estimated reading shall indicate that it is an estimated bill and that the meter reading figure is an estimated reading.

2) A bill based upon an actual reading shall indicate that the meter reading figure is an actual reading.

3) A bill based upon a customer reading shall indicate that the meter reading figure is a customer reading.

g) Unless the utility's attempt to access the meter has been prevented, as described in subsection (b)(3), the utility shall not disconnect a customer for non-payment of two or more consecutively estimated bills until the utility takes an actual reading of the meter to verify the accuracy of the billing.