



June 17, 2020

Sent via email

**Letter L-33-20**

To: All Utilities regulated by the British Columbia Utilities Commission

**Re: COVID-19 – Direction from the British Columbia Utilities Commission**

As the Covid-19 Pandemic (Pandemic) progresses and the province of British Columbia remains in a Provincial State of Emergency, the British Columbia Utilities Commission (BCUC) continues to observe the situation and the Pandemic's impact on utilities and their customers throughout British Columbia. On March 20, 2020, the BCUC issued letter L-13-20 which placed a 90 day moratorium on all customer disconnections unrelated to safety matters. That moratorium was put in place to ensure British Columbians would have a safe and secure location to shelter in place despite the unknown economic impacts that lie ahead.

Since that time, the BCUC has provided interim approval on billing and collection relief for utilities throughout British Columbia, and qualified utility customers in need of billing relief due to the Pandemic have applied for and been granted relief under regulatory approved relief mechanisms.

However, the Province has enacted BC's Restart Plan. We are currently in phase 2 of that plan, nearing entry to phase 3. Businesses are gradually reopening and employees are returning to work. As such, the BCUC believes it is appropriate to begin lifting restrictions for disconnections at this time.

Therefore, for the next 60 days, Public Utilities in BC are permitted to make disconnections in the following situations:

- 1) For matters of safety;
- 2) For matters related to closing accounts at the request of customers;
- 3) For accounts outstanding more than 120 days; and
- 4) For accounts with outstanding balances of greater than \$3,000.

Before making disconnections, utilities are reminded to ensure customers are provided adequate notice of impending disconnections. At least 30 days notice should be provided to customers before making disconnections. The BCUC will revisit restrictions on disconnections as the Pandemic continues.

Sincerely,

*Original signed by:*

Marija Tresoglavic  
Acting Commission Secretary

KB/jo