

PG&E CARE High Usage/Appeals Process Proposal

As directed by Ordering Paragraph 101 in D.12-08-044, the electric Utilities are required to implement PG&E's high usage customer proposal, with some modifications. Additionally, Ordering Paragraph 101(b) requires the Utilities to develop an expedited appeal process for those customers who may believe that they have been wrongfully de-enrolled to allow them the process to submit an appeal of the de-enrollment documenting their concerns and demonstrating their usage as "necessary, basic and legitimate household energy usage." The proposed processes are as follows:

High Usage Process

Stage 1 - Customers with electric usage above 400% of baseline in their most recent monthly billing cycle will have 45 days to provide a standard income verification document (IRS Transcript of Tax Return or Verification of Non-Filing) and agree to participate in the Energy Savings Assistance (ESA) program – including allowing access to all portions of the metered property for a post-participation inspection by the Central Inspection Program (CIP). Customers who do not respond will be removed from the CARE program and prohibited from re-enrolling in the CARE program for 24 months or until compliance with the stated requirements.

Stage 2 - Customers who successfully complete Stage 1 will be given a priority referral to the ESA program. Customers who *do not* meet the ESA eligibility requirements (due to prior program participation within the past 10 years, not meeting the three-measure minimum, landlord refusal, etc.) will move directly to Stage 3. Customers who *do* meet the ESA eligibility requirements will be given 30 days (or longer depending on contractor availability) to complete their ESA participation/CIP inspection and move to Stage 3. ESA program contractors will be trained to refer these customers to the Medical Baseline program, if applicable. CIP inspectors will be trained to inform the customer of the appeal process, and relevant load information (equipment or lighting with uncommonly high electricity usage requirements) will be noted on the customer's account regarding legitimate high usage for future reference in the event of an appeal. Customers who fail to keep multiple appointments, do not provide access to the metered property, refuse to allow a post-participation quality control inspection, or decline to participate will be removed from CARE and prohibited from re-enrolling for 24 months or until compliance with the stated requirements.

Stage 3 - Customers who successfully complete Stage 2 will be notified that, beginning in 90 days, their electric usage must not exceed 600% of baseline in any monthly billing cycle. A customer will be allowed three monthly billing cycles from notification to reduce their monthly electric usage to below 600% of baseline. The notification will include, based on the customer's baseline territory and end use, an example of the monthly kWh usage that would exceed the 600% of baseline threshold for both summer and winter seasons. The notification will also include energy efficiency tips, information on Medical Baseline, and other resources available to assist the customer to reduce their electric usage.

Appeal Process

After the conclusion of 90 days following the notification in Stage 3, and within two years thereafter, if the customer's electric usage exceeds 600% of baseline in any monthly billing cycle, the customer will be de-enrolled from CARE and barred from the program for 24 months. Customers who believe they have been wrongfully de-enrolled will be allowed to submit an expedited appeal. The expedited appeal process detailed below will provide customers who feel they have wrongfully been de-enrolled with an avenue to justify electric usage exceeding 600% of baseline:

1. Customers will be mailed a letter with information on the expedited appeal process and given **15 days** from the date on the letter to respond.
2. To appeal, customers will be required to document their concerns and provide a detailed explanation demonstrating their usage as necessary, basic, and legitimate household energy usage. Some examples include a large number of people in the household or customers with documented and necessary medical equipment which requires and supports the high usage. (The customer will be provided an additional opportunity to enroll in the Medical Baseline program.)
3. Customers will be allowed to respond via email, fax, or mail to a CARE Operations Supervisor in charge of expediting the appeal.
4. A PG&E panel, consisting of CARE and ESA program managers, a Customer Relations representative, and other possible subject matter experts, will review the customer's appeal and endeavor to determine if their usage appears to be "necessary, basic, and legitimate." This review may include reviewing notes on the customer's account and/or ESA assessment forms to see if legitimate high usage was observed. If an ESA assessment was not feasible, a field inspection may be conducted to validate the usage.
5. Customers will receive PG&E's written notice of approval or denial of the appeal **within 15 days** of receipt in order to avoid re-billing.
6. If PG&E makes the determination that there is reasonable justification demonstrating "necessary, basic and legitimate household energy usage," the customer will be re-enrolled in CARE.
7. Customers who respond late, causing a delay in the 30-day appeal process, will still be re-enrolled in CARE if their appeal is approved. However, they will not be eligible to be re-billed on CARE for any months in which they were billed on Non-CARE rates.
8. If PG&E is unable to re-enroll an approved customer in CARE within 15 days of receipt, the customer will be eligible to be re-billed for the discount missed, as long as they submitted the appeal within the required 15-day timeframe.
9. If the appeal is denied by PG&E, the customer will be advised that they may seek the Commission's assistance by contacting the designated Energy Division staff within 15 days. Contact information will be provided in the denial letter.
10. PG&E will provide Energy Division a point of contact to respond to any questions Energy Division may have during the period that the appeal is before the Commission, and who Energy Division can inform regarding the result of the appeal. This will assist Energy Division's effort to resolve the appeal in an expedited manner.
11. If Energy Division approves the customer's usage as "necessary, basic, and legitimate," PG&E will re-enroll the customer in CARE and re-bill them for the discount missed, as long as the customer submitted the appeal within the required 15-day timeframe.

Note - To the extent possible, notifications will be accessible to customers with disabilities and to customers without English language proficiency.