

7820.3900 INACCURATE NATURAL GAS METERS.

Subpart 1. **Meter too fast or too slow.** Whenever any meter is found upon test to have an average error of more than two percent fast, the utility shall refund to the customer the overcharge. Whenever any meter is found upon test to have an average error of more than two percent slow, the utility may charge for the gas consumed but not included in bills previously rendered. The refund or charge for both the fast and slow meter shall be based on the corrected meter reading for a period equal to one-half the time elapsed since the last previous test, but not to exceed six months, unless it can be established that the error was due to some cause, the date of which can be fixed with reasonable certainty, in which case the refund or charge shall be computed from that date, but in no event for a period longer than one year. The average error for a meter tested shall be defined as one-half the algebraic sum of the error at full-rated flow plus the error at check flow.

Subp. 2. **Meter fails to register or registers intermittently.** When the average error cannot be determined by test because the meter is not found to register or is found to register intermittently, the utility may charge for an estimated amount of gas used, which shall be calculated by averaging the amounts registered over corresponding periods in previous years or in the absence of such information, over similar periods of known accurate measurement preceding or subsequent thereto, but in no event shall such charge be for a period longer than one year.

Subp. 3. **Recalculation of bill.** 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. The refund to an existing customer may be in cash or as 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. If the recalculated bills indicate that the amount due the utility exceeds \$10, the utility may bill the customer for the amount due. The first billing rendered shall be separated from the regular bill and the charges explained in detail.

Subp. 4. **Failure to check faulty meter.** If a customer has called to the utility's attention doubts as to the meter's accuracy and the utility has failed within a reasonable time to check it, there shall be no back billing for the period between the date of the customer's notification and the date the meter was checked.

Statutory Authority: *MS s 216A.05; 216B.08; 216B.09*

History: *17 SR 1279; 33 SR 215*

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