

WAC 480-90-183 Complaint meter tests. (1) A gas utility must test and report to the customer the accuracy of a meter within twenty business days after receiving an initial request from a customer. The utility must allow the customer to order one meter test free of charge during a twelve-month period. The utility may appeal to the commission to waive the responsibility of performing the meter test, to request an extension to perform the meter test, or to be allowed to charge for the meter test. If the customer disputes the accuracy of the meter, the customer must allow the utility access for meter testing.

(2) The customer may, at the customer's option, either witness the meter test or designate a representative to witness the test. The customer may require the meter to be sealed upon removal in the presence of the customer or the customer's representative. The seal must not be broken until the test is made in the presence of the customer or the customer's representative, or until permission to break the seal has been granted by the commission. The utility must report the results of the meter test to the customer.

(3) A customer may request the utility to perform additional meter tests within twelve months of the last meter test, but additional meter tests will not delay disconnection of service under of WAC 480-90-128(9), Disconnection of service. The utility must immediately inform the customer of any additional meter test charges. If the customer elects to have the meter test performed, the utility must perform the test and report the test results to the customer within twenty business days. If the additional meter test results show the meter is performing accurately as defined in WAC 480-90-338, Metering tolerance, the utility may charge the customer for performing the additional meter tests. The charge of the meter test must be listed in the utility's tariff. The utility may not charge the customer for any additional meter test that shows the meter is performing outside acceptable tolerance levels as defined in WAC 480-90-338, Metering tolerance.

(4) If the customer disputes any meter test result, the utility or the customer may contact the commission to review the complaint. When the commission has notified the utility that a complaint has been received regarding the customer's meter, the utility may not change the meter in any manner unless authorized by the commission. If the utility violates this provision, the commission may consider it as supporting the customer's dispute since the change might affect the proof of the dispute. The commission may require the utility to perform an additional test and report the test results to the commission within ten business days.

(5) If a meter test reveals a meter error greater than specified as acceptable in WAC 480-90-338, Metering tolerance, the utility must repair or replace the meter at no cost to the customer. The utility must adjust the bills to the customer based on the best information available to determine the appropriate charges. The utility must offer payment arrangements in accordance with WAC 480-90-138(2), Payment arrangements.

(a) If the utility can identify the date the customer was first billed from a defective meter, the utility must refund or bill the customer for the proper usage from that date;

(b) If the utility cannot identify the date the customer was first billed from a defective meter, the utility must refund or bill the customer for the proper usage, not to exceed six months.

(6) Reports. The commission may require the utility to provide meter test results to the commission in response to a customer's com-

plaint. These reports must contain the name or address of the customer, the meter manufacturer's name, the manufacturer's and utility's meter number, the size or capacity of the meter, the date the meter was tested, the reading of the meter when tested, the accuracy of the meter as found, and the accuracy of the meter after adjustment.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 80.01.040 and 80.04.160. WSR 01-11-003 (Docket No. UG-990294, General Order No. R-484), § 480-90-183, filed 5/3/01, effective 6/3/01.]