

How to file a complaint

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

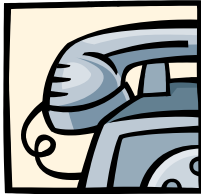
- Public utility companies are not allowed to unfairly discriminate as to providing services or kinds of billing arrangements available to consumers.
- Public utility companies are required to restore service promptly and fairly.
- Consumers have a right to access certain information collected by public utility companies.

Contact Your Agent or Utility Company First

If you have any questions or complaints concerning your service, many times a mistake has been made, and it will be corrected upon inquiry. A complaint by letter is best. Always keep a photocopy of your letter. If you contact the company by e-mail, keep copies of all communications.

If you decide to file your complaint by telephone, keep a written record of:

- The date and time of your call.
- The name of the person you talked to at the company.
- What was said during the call.



HELP IS AVAILABLE

You may use the attached complaint form for your convenience or you may submit the form electronically via email at: consumer.services@psncuc.nc.gov



North Carolina
The Tar Heel State

CONSUMER SERVICES

The Public Staff Consumer Services Division of the North Carolina Utilities Commission responds to thousands of individual consumer inquiries and complaints each year. The Consumer Services Division provides free professional information and complaint services to all residents of North Carolina. These sections were created to respond to public inquiries and to assist consumers regarding complaints about services received by residential and business customers as well as the general public.

The Consumer Services Division encourages consumers to try and resolve any problem with their company or agent before contacting our offices. When it becomes necessary to contact us, you may call or write to the Division.

Consumer Services Will:

- Thoroughly investigate your complaint.
- Help you get a clear response to your questions.
- Cut through red tape.
- Correct misunderstandings.

Consumer Services Cannot:

- Recommend a particular company, agent, or product.
- Provide legal services that are sometimes required to settle complicated problems. If we are not able to resolve your problem, we will tell you why. If the Administrative law and facts are on your side, we will try to see that your rights are protected and that your complaint is resolved in a satisfactory manner.



The Consumer Services Division can be reached in many different ways. We will try to help answer any general questions you have about public utilities. For more information, you may contact us via one of the following:

By Mail:
Public Staff
Consumer Services Division
4326 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4326

By Telephone:
Toll free: 1-866-380-9816
Local: 919-733-9277

Fax: 919-733-4744
Email: consumer.services@psncuc.nc.gov



Consumer Complaints & FAQ's



North Carolina Utilities Commission

Public Staff
Consumer Services Division

Briefly Describe Your Complaint

- Provide your name and the name of the Account holder (if different). Provide the name of the utility company involved, and your account number.
- Provide an explanation of your problem (i.e. what happened, who was involved, and why you think the company or agent is wrong).
- Explain how you tried to resolve the problem.
- Explain what you think the company or agent should do to resolve your problem.

Attach Copies of:

Letters or e-mails you have written to the utility company or agent concerning your complaint and letters or e-mails the company has written you.



- Notes from telephone conversations you may have had with the utility company or agent.
- Your telephone number or indicate other means to contact you. Include pertinent information you think supports your complaint.
- Letters written by other persons (your doctor or lawyer for example).

You may also visit our Public Staff website to access our complaint forms and get additional information at:

www.pubstaff.commerce.state.nc.us



How Soon Should I Expect A Response From the Consumer Services Division?

- You will be contacted as soon as we obtain a resolution most cases are resolved within a 24-72 hours period or longer depending on the complexity of the complaint.

When corresponding in writing:

- We will acknowledge receipt of your letter, within a week after we receive your written complaint.

What Contact Will Be Made With the Utility Agent or Company?

- In most cases, a letter and a copy of your complaint will be sent to the company or agent, requesting an explanation of its position. Telephone contact may be made to discuss the complaint, to ask questions, or to make specific requests.
- After the company or agent responds, we will determine what further actions, if any, we will take.

How Long Will the Investigation Take?

Normally, it takes between 1 to 30 days from the time we receive a complaint until we can provide our final response. However, it may take longer if your complaint involves a unique or complex problem, or if the utility or agent must conduct extensive research before responding.

Should I Call To Check On the Investigation's Progress?

- You do not need to call. We will keep you informed.
- If you have additional information, put it in writing.
- If it has been 30 days since you submitted your complaint, you may contact us to get an update on your case.



Please include the file number we assigned in our letter of acknowledgment, and send it to the person investigating your complaint.

FAQ's

- **What is an informal complaint?**

It is the process initiated by contacting the Consumer Services Division to request assistance in resolving a dispute with a regulated utility. This process should be pursued prior to submitting a formal complaint. When you contact the Division your case will be assigned to a Complaint Analyst who will document all of the pertinent information concerning your dispute, contact the utility and attempt to mediate a resolution of the dispute.

- **What is a formal complaint?**

If the Consumer Services Division is not able to assist you in resolving your dispute, you may request from the Division to provide you with instructions on how to proceed with a formal complaint to the Utilities commission. The Commission will serve the complaint on the utility and the utility will file an answer to the complaint. If you are not satisfied with the answer, you may request a hearing on the complaint. Should the commission decide to hear the complaint, a formal hearing will be scheduled.

- **What is "Slamming"?**

"Slamming" is the unauthorized switching of a customer's local or long distance service provider without the expressed authorization of the customer or his agent.

- **What is "Cramming"?**

"Cramming" involves billing for unclear, incorrect or unauthorized calls or services by long distance companies or information service providers on local telephone bills.

TIPS:

- To complain about charges involving cellular telephones, cable or satellite television contact the Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General at: 1-877-566-5322.
- To complain about long distance charges involving international and state-to-state calls, contact the Federal Communications Commission at: 1-888-235-5322.

