



STATE OF CONNECTICUT PUBLIC UTILITIES REGULATORY AUTHORITY

Frequently Asked Questions:

Docket No. 20-12-46

Residential Customer Credit and Spoilage Compensation for Future Storm-Related Outages

Under what circumstances will I receive a credit? What are the credits?

Eversource and UI are required to provide residential customers a credit of \$25, on the balance of the customer's account, for each full day (24 hours) of distribution-system service outage that occurs for the customer that lasts for more than 96 consecutive hours after the occurrence of an emergency.

Further, both electric utilities are also required to provide residential customers \$250 in compensation for medication and food that expired or spoiled due to a distribution-system service outage lasting longer than 96 consecutive hours following an emergency. Unlike outage credits, which will be applied to the balance of a customer's account, spoilage compensation will be issued via a check to the customer of record, unless a customer submits a claim application requesting payment as a bill credit.

How will I know if I'm eligible to receive a credit?

PURA's decision directs both UI and Eversource to provide residential customers the daily outage credit within 60 calendar days of the day on which restoration is substantially complete (i.e., 99% customers restored) following the emergency.

The decision also directs the electric utilities to issue spoilage compensation to eligible customers either within 60 calendar days of the day on which restoration is substantially complete, or within 45 calendar days following receipt of a properly submitted claim, whichever is later. The Authority also directs the EDCs to accept all spoilage compensation claims received within 60 calendar days of when restoration is substantially complete.

Petitions by either UI or Eversource for waivers (i.e., a request to *not* pay the credits) will affect the time frames above. The Take Back Our Grid Act permits the electric utilities to file a waiver request within 14 days following an emergency event.

Will I be getting a credit for Tropical Storm Isaias damages?

Not through this decision.

The Take Back Our Grid Act was signed into law on October 2, 2020, following Tropical Storm Isaias. Today's decision, in which PURA establishes the circumstances, standards, and methodologies applicable to Eversource and UI regarding the implementation of daily outage credit and spoilage compensation provisions takes effect on July 1, 2021.

In future storm events, do I need to file a claim to receive spoilage compensation?

Yes. Spoilage Compensation will not be provided automatically. Eligible residential customers who have lost food or medication must submit an affirmative claim to their electric utility. Eligible customers will be required to attest that they lost food or medicine and that such loss was the result of the qualifying distribution-system service outage. PURA's decision requires the electric utilities to notify eligible customers of the option to submit a claim following a qualifying emergency event.

Can I file an appeal if I don't receive the full amount of the expected credit?

Both Eversource and UI already have an appeals process in place for customers who submit a claim but are denied. Today's decision requires the EDCs, by July 30, 2021, to formally articulate their claims appeals processes in a manner that would be available to and easily understood by customers.

How long after an emergency will it take Eversource and United Illuminating (UI) to identify the total number of customers eligible for credits and reimbursements?

Through today's decision, PURA has mandated that both Eversource and UI provide residential customers the daily outage credit within 60 calendar days of the day on which restoration is substantially complete (i.e., 99% customers restored) following the emergency. Petitions by either UI or Eversource for waivers (i.e., a request to *not* pay the credits) may affect this time frame, as PURA is required by law to conduct an adjudicated proceeding to consider the merits of a waiver request.

I used a back-up generator after my home experienced an outage. Will that disqualify me from being eligible for an outage credit or reimbursement?

No. While Eversource and UI can inquire about the presence of a back-up generator insofar as it relates to a legitimate business purpose, such as in the course of an interconnection application made by or on behalf of a customer, the use or presence of an emergency generator shall not be a disqualifying factor (or a factor at all) when determining eligibility for the daily outage credit or spoilage compensation.

I pay my electric utilities directly to my landlord, am I eligible for a customer credit and for spoilage compensation? If so, how do I get my credit?

In today's decision, PURA directs the EDCs to provide "submetering" customers (i.e., customers who pay their electric utility bill to their landlord) with the same credits as customers who receive their electric bills directly from the EDCs.

Unlike customers who receive their electric bills from the EDCs, submetering customers must submit through the EDC's claims process a request for both the outage credit and spoilage compensation. The submetering customer will receive the outage credit from their landlord through their electric bill and will separately receive a check for spoilage compensation from the electric utility.

What does a "distribution-system service outage" mean?

Today's decision interprets "distribution-system service outage" as a loss of power experienced by a customer due to a fault in the electric distribution company's (EDC) distribution system. The phrase is not defined in statute. However, the terms "distribution system" and "service outage" have commonly approved usages.

Importantly, while the end result is often the same (meaning that a customer does not have power), distribution-system service outages do not include outages in which power restoration is not the direct responsibility of the electric utility (e.g., where damage to, or a fault in, customer equipment requires service from an electrician hired by the customer, such as a weather head or service wire).

Are the EDCs authorized to seek waiver petitions? If so, how does that impact customers eligible for storm-related credits and reimbursements?

Yes. As directed by Public Act 20-5, the Authority has established a detailed "waiver" process by which the electric utilities can seek relief from providing customer credits after a storm. The EDCs must submit any waiver request within 14 days after the end of an emergency.

The payment of customer credits and spoilage compensation is placed on hold if an EDC submits a waiver. To address the hardship to customers caused by delayed credits and spoilage compensation, PURA's decision confirms that it will conduct an expedited process, to reach resolution within two months after receipt of any Application submitted for emergencies categorized in which between 10 and 70% of the EDC's customers were without power. In all waiver proceedings, the EDCs carry the burden of proving that a waiver is reasonable and warranted.