

Your Account

Establishing an Account

When you apply for new service with a utility company, you will likely be asked to provide personal information. If you are establishing a new account over the phone, make sure you are working with the utility company before providing this information. A utility company may request personal information such as:

- A social security number,
- Date of birth,
- Driver's license number, and/or
- Copy of driver's license or photo ID

One reason utility companies need this information is to verify the personal information provided matches that of the person who is applying for service. These measures can prevent someone from creating an account under a false name or the name of another person. The utility company can explain to you why this information is needed to create a new account, how it will be used, and whether it will be shared with other companies.

Protecting Your Account

Since your account with a utility company may contain personal information, consider ways to safeguard your account information to prevent someone from accessing your account to make changes.



- Ask your utility company to provide information about what they do to protect the confidentiality of your customer information.
- For example, telecommunications providers must follow the Federal

Communication Commission's (FCC) rules to protect customer proprietary network information (CPNI).

- Create a password for your account. If you use a password to obtain your account information from the utility company:
 - Avoid using any sensitive or readily apparent information, such as your social security number, date of birth, mother's maiden name, or telephone number.
 - Don't choose a password that is obvious, such as a pet's name or consecutive numbers.
- Most utility companies allow the account holder to authorize others to have access to the account. Allow another person(s) to have access to your account only if you feel it may be necessary. While another person may be authorized, there may still be restrictions on what he/she can access.
- Review your monthly billing statement carefully for any unauthorized charges or changes made to your account. Contact your utility company immediately if you feel there is an error or if you have any questions.

Account Holder Information

If your residence receives service from a utility company but you are not the account holder, it is important to contact the utility in the event the account holder dies. An account cannot be in the name of a person who is no longer living. If the

account name is not updated, you may face disconnection of service for not having a valid account holder. Your utility company can provide information on how to change the name on the account in this situation.



The utility company should also be notified if the account holder's information changes or the account holder moves and other residents continue to use service.

Safeguarding Your Information

Here are some general tips for safeguarding your personal information:

- Shred or tear financial documents, receipts, insurance forms, etc. before throwing them away
- Protect your Social Security Number
- Don't give out personal information unless you are certain of the person with whom you are dealing
- Don't use obvious passwords
- Keep your information in a secure place
- Only carry identifying information if it is needed

If your personal information may have been stolen, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has tips on what steps you should take based on the type of information. The FTC takes fraud-related complaints. Fraud-related complaints are entered into a secure, online database available to law enforcement agencies. You should also file a report with local law enforcement. The FTC can provide additional information on consumer issues. The FTC can be reached toll free at 1-877-IDTHEFT (438-4338) or online at www.ftc.gov/idtheft.



Questions?

The ORS Can Help

The Consumer Services Division of the Office of Regulatory Staff can be reached several ways.

Phone 803-737-5230 (Columbia, S.C.)
1-800-922-1531 (toll-free in S.C.)
803-737-5175 TTY (Columbia, S.C.)
1-800-334-2217 TTY (toll-free in S.C.)

Fax 803-737-4750

Web www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov

Hours 8:30 a.m.—5:00 p.m.
Monday through Friday
(closed state holidays)

About the ORS

The S.C. Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) was created in 2004 by the S.C. General Assembly.

The ORS represents the public interest of South Carolina in utility regulation with regard to rates, charges, service standards, facilities, and practices of the major utility industries - electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water/wastewater, and transportation - before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (PSC), the court system, the S.C. General Assembly, and federal regulatory bodies. The ORS has responsibility for oversight of railroad safety and natural gas pipeline safety in the state.

In fulfilling this mission, the ORS strives to balance the concerns of the using and consuming public, the financial integrity of public utilities, and the economic development of South Carolina.

Utility Account Security & Privacy



Information for Consumers