

## **Medically Essential Electric Customers; Overview**

### **Eligibility**

- “Medically essential” means the medical dependence on electric-powered equipment that must be operated continuously or as circumstances require as specified by a physician to avoid the loss of life or immediate hospitalization of the customer or another permanent resident at the residential service address.

### **Application & Certification**

- Utility must maintain explanation of medically essential service policy on website
- Customer must complete certifications – both a customer certification and licensed physician certification – prior to being placed on medically essential service list
- Customer must recertify every 12 months
  - 30 days prior to expiration, the Utility must mail customer recertification materials. If not received within 30-day period, the Utility may remove from medically essential service list

### **Scheduled Disconnection of Medically Essential Service**

- The Utility must provide adequate notice to medically essential service customers prior to a scheduled disconnection of service
  - The Utility may discontinue service without notice whenever emergency threatens health or safety of public or utility’s system.
- The Utility must contact customer by phone 24 hours prior to any scheduled disconnection
- If cannot reach by phone, the Utility must send representative to residence no later than 4 p.m. of the day before disconnection.
- If no contact is made, the Utility must leave written notification at the residence notifying customer of scheduled disconnection
- The Utility must designate employee(s) who have authority to direct an ordered continuation of medically essential service



## **Medically Essential Service Policy**

The Utility offers medically essential service customers that are certified in accordance with this Policy with notice of scheduled power disconnection, to allow such customers time to secure back-up power for medically essential equipment.

### **Eligibility; Definitions**

A medically essential service customer is a residential customer: (1) whose electric service is medically essential, and (2) who has been certified as a medically essential service customer by a physician licensed to practice in the state of Florida.

The term “medically essential” means the medical dependence on electric-powered equipment that must be operated continuously or as circumstances require as specified by a physician to avoid the loss of life or immediate hospitalization of the customer or another permanent resident at the residential service address.

The Utility shall maintain a written explanation of its medically essential service policy on its website, at [www.cityofalachua.com](http://www.cityofalachua.com).

### **Application & Certification Requirements**

Certification of a customer's electricity needs as medically essential requires the customer to complete certification Form A and Form B, below, completed by a physician licensed in this state which states in medical and nonmedical terms why the electric service is medically essential. Completed Form A and Form B must be mailed to:

City of Alachua  
Attention: Utility Billing Department  
PO Box 9  
Alachua, FL 32616-0009

Medically essential service must be recertified once every 12 months. Utility shall send the certified customer by regular mail a package of recertification materials, including recertification forms, at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the customer’s certification. The materials shall advise the certified customer that he or she must complete and submit the recertification forms within 30 days after the expiration of customer’s existing certification. If the recertification forms are not received within this 30-day period, The Utility may terminate the customer’s certification.

False certification of medically essential service by a physician is a violation of section 458.331(1) (h) or 459.015(1) (i), Florida Statutes, and as such is grounds for disciplinary action by the Board of Medicine or Osteopathic Medicine. **Scheduled Disconnection of Medically Essential Service**



The Utility may disconnect service to a residence whenever an emergency may threaten the health or safety of a person, the surrounding area, or the utility's distribution system. The Utility shall act promptly to restore service as soon as feasible.

No later than 24 hours before any scheduled disconnection of service for nonpayment of bills to a customer who requires medically essential service, The Utility shall attempt to contact the customer by telephone in order to provide notice of the scheduled disconnection. If the customer does not have a telephone number listed on the account or if the utility cannot reach the customer or other adult resident of the premises by telephone by the specified time, The Utility shall send a representative to the customer's residence to attempt to contact the customer, no later than 4 p.m. of the day before scheduled disconnection. If contact is not made, however, the Utility may leave written notification at the residence advising the customer of the scheduled disconnection. Thereafter, the Utility may disconnect service on the specified date.

The Utility has designated the following Utility employees as authorized to direct an ordered a continuation or restoration of medically essential service:

Each customer who requires medically essential service is solely responsible for any backup equipment or power supply and a planned course of action in the event of a power outage or interruption of service. The Utility does not assume, and expressly disclaims, any obligation or duty to monitor the health or condition of the person requiring medically essential service; to insure continuous service; to call, contact or otherwise advise of service interruptions; or to take any other action (or to refrain from any action) that differs from the normal operations of the Utility.

In administering medically essential service the Utility cannot provide notice of power failures due to natural causes or unforeseen system problems. Furthermore, the Utility does not assume any obligation or duty to monitor the health or condition of the person requiring medically essential service, to insure continuous service, to call, contact, or otherwise advise of services interruptions, or take any other action that differs from its normal operations.

Nothing in this procedure shall impose any special duty upon the Utility or create any liability not previously existing. The procedure shall not create any private right of action.



\*\*\*\*\*PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY\*\*\*\*\*

PART A:  
Medically Essential Electric Service  
CUSTOMER APPLICATION

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Customer Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last 4 digits of Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_

Service Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Person Using Equipment: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this application, [Customer Name] \_\_\_\_\_ is acknowledging that application and the conditions have been reviewed in their entirety. The Utility has fully explained how my account will be handled regarding any collection action due to nonpayment of the bill. I understand that the Utility does not guarantee uninterrupted service or assign a priority status to my account for service restoration due to outages. I understand that I must be prepared with backup equipment and/or power and a planned course of action in the event of prolonged outages. I agree to notify the Utility when this equipment is no longer in use.

Customer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

WARNING – PART A – CUSTOMER APPLICATION: Knowingly making a false or misleading statement in completing the Customer Application could result in the denial or termination of the medically essential service application.



\*\*\*\*\*PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY\*\*\*\*\*

PART B:  
Medically Essential Electric Service  
Physician’s Certificate

Physician’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Physician’s License Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician’s Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician’s Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I, [PHYSICIAN NAME] \_\_\_\_\_, duly licensed and authorized to practice medicine in the State of Florida, hereby certify that [CUSTOMER NAME] \_\_\_\_\_, who resides at [CUSTOMER ADDRESS] \_\_\_\_\_, is under my care and relies upon continuously operating electric-powered medical equipment in order to sustain his/her life or to avoid serious medical complications requiring his/her immediate hospitalization. The continuously operating medical equipment upon which this patient relies is described as follows:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The patient uses this equipment \_\_\_ hour(s) within a twenty-four (24) hour period. The following is an explanation of why, in my professional opinion, this patient needs to use this equipment continuously in order to sustain his/her life or to avoid serious medical complications requiring his/her immediate hospitalization:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Physician’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

False certification of medically essential service by a physician is a violation of section 458.331(1) (h) or 459.015(1) (i), Florida Statutes, and as such is grounds for disciplinary action by the Board of Medicine or Osteopathic Medicine. This certificate shall be deemed valid for a period of twelve (12) months from the date the customer is determined to qualify as a Medically Essential Service Customer within the meaning of this Policy.

Note to Physician – Please return Part A and B of the application packet to:

City Of Alachua  
Attention: Utility Billing Department  
PO Box 9  
Alachua, FL 32616-0009

**City of Alachua - The Good Life Community**  
**PO Box 9, Alachua FL 32616-0009**  
**386-418-6110**

**Section 366.15, Florida Statutes (2018)**

**Medically essential electric public utility service.**

(1) As used in this section, the term “medically essential” means the medical dependence on electric-powered equipment that must be operated continuously or as circumstances require as specified by a physician to avoid the loss of life or immediate hospitalization of the customer or another permanent resident at the residential service address.

(2) Each utility shall designate employees who are authorized to direct an ordered continuation or restoration of medically essential electric service.

(3)(a) Each utility shall annually provide a written explanation of the certification process for medically essential electric service to each utility customer. Certification of a customer’s electricity needs as medically essential requires the customer to complete forms supplied by the utility and to submit a form completed by a physician licensed in this state pursuant to chapter 458 or chapter 459 which states in medical and nonmedical terms why the electric service is medically essential. False certification of medically essential service by a physician is a violation of s. [458.331\(1\)\(h\)](#) or s. [459.015\(1\)\(i\)](#).

(b) Medically essential service shall be recertified once every 12 months. The utility shall send the certified customer by regular mail a package of recertification materials, including recertification forms, at least 30 days prior to the expiration of the customer’s certification. The materials shall advise the certified customer that he or she must complete and submit the recertification forms within 30 days after the expiration of customer’s existing certification. If the recertification forms are not received within this 30-day period, the utility may terminate the customer’s certification.

(4) Each utility shall certify a customer’s electric service as medically essential if the customer completes the requirements of subsection (3).

(5) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a utility may disconnect service to a residence whenever an emergency may threaten the health or safety of a person, the surrounding area, or the utility’s distribution system. The utility shall act promptly to restore service as soon as feasible.

(6) No later than 24 hours before any scheduled disconnection of service for nonpayment of bills to a customer who requires medically essential service, a utility shall attempt to contact the customer by telephone in order to provide notice of the scheduled disconnection. If the customer does not have a telephone number listed on the account or if the utility cannot reach the customer or other adult resident of the premises by telephone by the specified time, the utility shall send a representative to the customer’s residence to attempt to contact the customer, no later than 4 p.m. of the day before scheduled disconnection. If contact is not made, however, the public utility may leave written notification at the residence advising the customer of the scheduled disconnection. Thereafter, the utility may disconnect service on the specified date.

(7) Each utility customer who requires medically essential service is responsible for making satisfactory arrangements with the utility to ensure payment for such service, and such arrangements must be consistent with the requirements of the utility's tariff.

(8) Each public utility customer who requires medically essential service is solely responsible for any backup equipment or power supply and a planned course of action in the event of a power outage or interruption of service.

(9) Each utility that provides electric service to any customer who requires medically essential service shall call, contact, or otherwise advise such customer of scheduled service interruptions.

(10)(a) Each utility shall provide information on sources of state or local agency funding which may provide financial assistance to the utility's customers who require medically essential service and who notify the public utility of their need for financial assistance.

(b) 1. Each utility that operates a program to receive voluntary financial contributions from the public utility's customers to provide assistance to persons who are unable to pay for the utility's services shall maintain a list of all agencies to which the public utility distributes such funds for such purposes and shall make the list available to any such person who requests the list.

2. Each public utility that operates such a program shall:

a. Maintain a system of accounting for the specific amounts distributed to each such agency, and the public utility and such agencies shall maintain a system of accounting for the specific amounts distributed to persons under such respective programs.

b. Train its customer service representatives to assist any person who possesses a medically essential certification as provided in this section in identifying such agencies and programs.

(11) Nothing in this act shall form the basis for any cause of action against a utility. Failure to comply with any obligation created by this act does not constitute evidence of negligence on the part of the utility.