

Telephone Service for Those at Risk of Domestic Violence

Victims of domestic violence and others at significant risk can avoid having their local telephone service disconnected if they agree to enter into a time payment agreement after falling behind on paying their bill.

The law applies to survivors of elder abuse, stalking, sexual assault, or the disabled who are protected by no contact orders, protective orders, or other court orders prohibiting contact.

Senate Bill 983, passed in 2005, directed the Oregon Public Utility Commission to establish rules that spell out the process that regulated phone companies will follow.

The law applies to the two major telephone companies—CenturyLink (formerly Qwest) and Frontier, as well as most of the smaller regulated companies. It is optional for cooperative phone companies.

The PUC helped develop procedures for telephone companies to receive copies of court orders and affidavits from customers who are in danger of having their telephones disconnected.

The plan is modeled after a medical certification program that telephone companies provide through the Commission.

After you receive a past-due notice from your telephone company, contact your phone company about the new program. You must call **before** your telephone is disconnected.

Your telephone company will contact you within 10 days with instructions how to set up a time payment agreement.



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You must provide the telephone company with a copy of a court order, which restrains someone from contact with an at-risk person in the household. You must also provide an affidavit.

What is an affidavit? An affidavit is a form you submit to the telephone company stating someone in the household is at significant risk. It **must** be attached to a copy of the court order.

The affidavit must include:

- ◆ Name of the person to whom the court order applies
- ◆ Relationship to the customer
- ◆ Expiration date of the order



The affidavit must be notarized by a notary public.



The law does not excuse a customer from paying their overdue bill. However, the law does entitle you to enter into a reasonable payment agreement to pay past due amounts.

At a minimum, time payment agreements must include the following terms:

- ◆ Initial down of \$10 or 25% (whichever is greater) of the balance you owe.
- ◆ Full payment of overdue balance must be made within 90 days of agreement.
- ◆ Customer agrees to keep bills current. Payments must be made each month

If you have questions about this program, call the Oregon Public Utility Commission, Consumer Section at: 1-800-522-2404