



AUC

Alberta Utilities Commission

ATCO Gas AltaGas Utilities Inc. Direct Energy Regulated Services

**Interim Decision
Amended Terms and Conditions of Service -
Disconnection of Gas Services**

May 17, 2011

The Alberta Utilities Commission

Decision 2011-217:

ATCO Gas, AltaGas Utilities Inc.,

Direct Energy Regulated Services

Interim Decision

Amended Terms and Conditions of Service -

Disconnection of Gas Services

Application No. 1607327

May 17, 2011

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Fifth Avenue Place, 4th Floor, 425 - 1 Street SW

Calgary, Alberta

T2P 3L8

Telephone: (403) 592-8845

Fax: (403) 592-4406

Web site: www.auc.ab.ca

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1 Introduction & Background

1. The Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC or Commission) approves the terms and conditions for regulated “gas distribution service”, as defined in the *Gas Utilities Act*, for ATCO Gas, a division of ATCO Gas and Pipelines Ltd. (ATCO) and AltaGas Utilities Inc. (AltaGas).
2. The Commission also approves the terms and conditions for the provision of “gas services”, as defined in the *Gas Utilities Act*, pursuant to a default rate tariff by a default supply provider. Direct Energy Regulated Services, a business unit of Direct Energy Marketing Limited (DERS) is the default supply provider in the ATCO service area and AltaGas is the default supply provider in the AltaGas service area.
3. The terms and conditions of service of each of the gas distribution utilities and of the default supply providers provide in certain circumstances for the disconnection of gas services to residential and commercial residential properties at the distribution utility’s instigation or upon request of the default supply provider or a retailer as the result of non-payment of outstanding accounts.
4. The Commission considers public safety to be of paramount importance in any dispute with respect to the provision of gas distribution service or the payment of outstanding accounts. Protecting residential and commercial residential customers from disconnection of gas distribution service and gas services during the winter heating season is in keeping with the Commission’s public interest mandate in regulating gas utilities.
5. While the Commission recognizes that some existing terms and conditions of service prohibit the disconnection of gas services between the period of December 1 to April 14, the Commission considers that a uniform prohibition from November 1 to April 14 is better suited to the Alberta climate. A uniform prohibition would also assist public understanding and avoid the potential for different periods applying in various parts of the province.

2 Commission Direction

6. Each of ATCO, AltaGas and DERS is directed to file an application with the Commission on or prior to June 30, 2011 requesting an amendment to its terms and conditions of service to prohibit the disconnection of gas distribution service and gas services provided by a default supply provider or by a retailer to residential and commercial residential, including multi-family, property sites, between the period of November 1 in a year to April 14 of the following year for any reason other than as the result of the written request from the property owner. The

amended terms and conditions shall also prohibit disconnection at these property sites between April 15 and October 31 when the overnight temperature is forecast to drop below zero (0) degrees Celsius in the 24 hour period immediately following the proposed disconnect within the gas distribution utility's service area. All amendments will have an effective date of August 1, 2011.

7. The Commission recognizes that there may be cost impacts to the provision of gas distribution service by gas distribution utilities and gas services by default supply providers as a consequence of implementing the changes directed by this interim decision. Parties may make application to the Commission to address these cost impacts as required.

3 Order

8. It is hereby ordered that:

- (1) Each of ATCO Gas and AltaGas Utilities Inc. as providers of gas distribution service are directed to comply with the terms of this Interim Decision.
- (2) Each of Direct Energy Regulated Services and AltaGas Utilities Inc. as providers of gas services as default supply providers, are directed to comply with the terms of this Interim Decision.

Dated on May 17, 2011.

The Alberta Utilities Commission



Willie Grieve
Commission Chair