

FILE



The Public Utilities
Commission of Ohio

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2009 JUN 11 PM 12:31

09-496-EL-655

Case Number

Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
Attn: Docketing
180 E. Broad St.
Columbus, OH 43215

PUCO
Formal Complaint Form

David Barrickman
Customer Name

435 Garrison Road
Customer Address

Ashtabula, Ohio 44004
City State Zip

Against

#110027991196
Account Number

The Illuminating Company

Customer Service Address (if different from above)

~~Chambersburg, PA~~ Akron, Ohio 44309
Utility Company Name City State Zip

Please describe your complaint. (Attach additional sheets if necessary)

See attached

This is to certify that the images appearing are an accurate and complete reproduction of a case file document delivered in the regular course of business.
Technician ✓ Date Processed JUN 11 2009

David Barrickman
Signature

440-993-6535
Customer Telephone Number

To: PUCO

From: David and Debra Barrickman

Date: June 9, 2009

RE: Account #110027991196

We receive our electric service from The Illuminating Company, based in Akron, Ohio. On Thursday, April 23, 2009 power was shut off because our electric bill for January, February and March of 2009 was unpaid. On Friday, April 24, 2009 we paid the charge for these three months in full. My concern is that a security deposit of \$142.00 and a reconnection charge of \$9.00 were also required and paid. It is my contention that the security deposit and reconnection fee should be refunded as the series of events that led to the three months of unpaid bills was put into action by The Illuminating Company. Please consider the following information. (comments from Illuminating Company employees can be verified via the tape recordings made of the conversations).

- We own rental houses. One of these houses is located at 1312 West 47th Street, Ashtabula.
- In December of 2008, the renter at this address left. She called The Illuminating Company to let them know they should take the electricity out of her name and put it back in the name of David Barrickman. (FYI – we have had renters move into and out of houses we own for the last ten years. This is the procedure that is always used.)
- For whatever reason, when changing the electricity back into our name, someone at The Illuminating Company made a mistake and began having our 435 Garrison Road bill (our residence) sent to the empty rental house at West 47th Street.
- When we called to ask why our electricity was shut off, the person we talked with told us the bill was being sent to West 47th Street and changed the address back to 435 Garrison Road. (FYI – This is the address our electric bill has come to for over 33 years).
- During the week of April 27th, I talked to Kathy at The Illuminating Company. She said that perhaps the computer “defaulted” to the West 47th Street address. Another suggestion that Kathy gave was that perhaps the company representative that was taking the call clicked the wrong button.
- When asked about returning the security deposit, Kathy referred us to Robin in Customer Service. Robin told us that we could not be refunded the money. When I asked to talk with another person, I was transferred to Misty who also told us that we could not be refunded our money.
- At this point, I called the PUCO and talked with Darlene. She agreed to look into this matter and get back to us. When she returned our call, she left a voice mail saying that we could not have a refund because The Illuminating Company had tried to contact us by phone to tell us that we were delinquent on our bills and we hung up on them.
- We pondered this matter for some time as we could not remember hanging up on anyone. Then it dawned on us that perhaps instead of a “real person” calling us, The Illuminating Company may have used a taped message. And, yes, we do hang up on tape recorded messages. But in all honesty – doesn’t everyone?
- I called the PUCO again on May 19th to ask about the “real person” vs. a tape recording and talked with Steve. He said that I had a “good point” and that he would talk with Darlene.
- Darlene called me back to tell me that we could not have our refund back since contact was attempted. She also mentioned that there is a PUCO rule that states just because a person does not receive a bill is not an excuse for not paying the bill. What? When I mentioned that I did not think folks would have read the small print and know about this rule, she admitted that she was not aware of the rule until she began to work at the PUCO. When I asked her if she had ever hung up on a tape recorded message, she said she only had a cell phone and so she had never received such a call.

Here is my concern. I realize that I will receive my security deposit back after a year if I pay my bills in a timely manner. I can’t begin to tell you how humiliating this is. We have paid our bills on time for over 33 years. I have a method of paying bills. I collect them in a basket as they come in. Once a month I sit down and pay all of the bills. I do not check off one by one – I have paid the water bill ✓, I have paid my cable bill ✓, I have paid my electric ✓. Perhaps this is not the best method – but it worked for over 33 years until the CEI made a mistake. It is not as if we did not have the money to pay the bill – as we paid in full as soon as we knew about the bills – we just did not know. We had no warning that the power was going to be turned off.

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I know that utility companies go out of their way to work out payment plans for folks who cannot pay their bills. At times I think that the bills are actually waived. How, then, can a good, faithful customer who has paid electric bills for over 33 years be embarrassed and humiliated because of an error that was made by the company.

We are asking that our security deposit and reconnection fee be returned to us immediately and not be held for "ransom" to be sure that we will pay our bill. Thank you for considering this request. I will gladly answer any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

David and Debra Barrickman
435 Garrison Road
Ashtabula, Ohio 44004
440.993.6535