

1. Before the 2009 rate case how many days were there between the utility's bill generation and the bill due date? (i.e. how many days did the residential customer have to pay the bill before a late fee could be charged?).

Austin Energy adopted industry best practices in receivables management; putting it in line with other utilities in Central Texas which follow the minimum bill duration guidelines allowable by the PUC. Bill duration is defined as the length of time between when a bill is printed and when it is due. PUC guidelines state that 16 days is an acceptable duration between bill print date and due date. If the due date falls on a weekend or holiday, payment will be the first business day following.

The top three Texas utilities by customer base in 2009: TXU Energy, Reliant Energy and CPS Energy have each adopted the PUC's 16 day bill duration guideline. Austin Energy, while ranked fourth in terms of size in the state of Texas was significantly out of line in terms of best practice with its bill due date duration of 23 days. While best practice dictates a 16 day bill duration, Austin Energy allows customers an additional day and shorten its bill duration to 17. Memphis Light, Gas & Water, which have a comparable size customer base, have a bill duration that is even less at 15 days.

2. In the collections process diagram provided by Austin Energy in last week's meeting, Austin Energy referred to bill generation. What does bill generation mean? Does it mean the day Austin Energy "mails" the bill? Please explain. In your explanation, please identify whether the bill is "mailed" by Austin Energy (or its agent) from Austin or from what other city.

Bill generation date is the "Bill Print Date" on the bill and is the date the bill was produced. Bills are mailed by our bill print vendor from Omaha, Nebraska.

3. At the last meeting, Austin Energy commented that it now had payment arrangements with repayment periods of 220-plus(?) months. How many payment arrangements does Austin Energy currently have with residential customers that are:
 - a. Five years or less
 - b. Between five years and ten years
 - c. Ten years
 - d. Ten to fifteen years
 - e. Over fifteen years

See attached spreadsheet supplied in PIR 19185 on DPA Stats.

4. Please provide the following information for the group of Austin Energy customers who currently have payment arrangements greater than five years:
 - a. The age of the past due balances (i.e. how long has the customer had a past due balance that is part of the payment arrangement)
 - b. Whether customers are critical care customers or other customers with severe health problems)
 - c. Whether the past due balances include past due balances owed to the City of Austin's water utility?
 - d. If the answer to 4(c) is yes, then how do the water utility past due balances compare to the electric utility past due balances as percentages of the total water and electric bill due. (For instance, water past due balances comprise 15% of the total water and electric past due balances for these customers)
 - e. Whether the past due balances are generally consistent or whether the past due balances include unusual consumption patterns such as would be caused by a water leak or by a broken cooling appliance that causes the appliance to demand excessive consumption of energy.

This information is not tracked or reported in this manner. See attached spreadsheet supplied in PIR 19185 on DPA Stats.

5. For those customers who have payment arrangements of twenty-four months or less, how do their past due water utility balances compare with the total water and electric utilities past due balances? (Since this number could be quite large, you may use anecdotal information based on general observation. If you do, please note as such and explain the reliability of the information.)

We do not track that information. No anecdotal information will be supplied as that information is not factual.

6. When an Austin Energy customer pays at HEB or some other agency-pay station, how does that payment get credited to the customer's account and how long does it take? For instance, if the customer pays at HEB on the due date, has that customer paid timely or will it be considered paid late and subject to a late payment fee? In your answer, please explain briefly how Austin Energy posts customer payments from the various options: electronic payment, payment by mail, payment at an Austin Energy customer care building; and at a third-party agency pay station. In your explanation please identify the date Austin Energy uses to credit the customer's account as paid. (For instance, when a customer pays through mail does Austin Energy credit the bill paid on the date stamped by the postal service, the day the entity identified on the envelope accompanying Austin Energy receives the letter, or some subsequent date after that.)

Mail – AE takes possession from the USPS and cannot be responsible for late mail service, postal delays, or incorrectly delivered mail. AE becomes responsible for posting the payment the day AE takes possession of the payments from the USPS. 100% of all payments are posted daily at AE that are received same day from USPS.

Utility Service Centers – All payments made in person at an AE utility service center are posted real-time to utility accounts. Payments posted immediately stop pending severance activity and will prevent a disconnect.

Third Party Agency - We currently have authorized pay stations which are listed on austinenergy.com and these payments are posted the next day.

Electronic Payments- These payments are posted the day we receive it in our electronic files. These are usually the next day after the payment is made. The only delay would be the sender had a problem on their side which is beyond our control.

There are also unauthorized pay stations such as Wal-Mart, K-Mart and other types of retailers who charge the customer a fee for this service. You can purchase a 1 day payment and it usually posts within two days. They also have a 3 day payment and it usually posts within 5 days. The customer is made aware of this at the time of purchase for this service. We are currently working to make these authorized pay stations.