

## YOUR RIGHTS AS A CUSTOMER

This document summarizes Your Rights as a Customer and is based on customer protection rules adopted by the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT). These rules apply to all retail electric providers (REPs), including those affiliated with your Transmission and Distribution Service Provider (TDSP) (Affiliated REP) and the provider of last resort (POLR), unless otherwise noted. You may view the PUCT’s complete set of electric rules at <http://www.puc.texas.gov/agency/rulesnlaws/subrules/electric/Electric.aspx>.

### Contacts

#### Volt Electricity Provider, LP and PUCT Contact Information:

NAME	Volt Electricity Provider, LP
PUCT REP CERTIFICATE NUMBER:	10226
INTERNET ADDRESS:	<a href="http://www.voltep.com">www.voltep.com</a>
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Residential: <a href="mailto:customerservice@voltep.com">customerservice@voltep.com</a>
MAILING ADDRESS:	Attn: Contract Administration P.O. Box 692210 Houston, TX 77269-2210
TELEPHONE NUMBER:	Residential: 281-369-5900 or (866)340-8658
OFFICE HOURS OF OPERATION:	Residential: Mon. – Fri. 9:00 am – 5:00 pm CPT
FAX NUMBER:	(281) 809-4601
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF TEXAS (PUCT)	Address: Consumer Protection Division PO Box 13326, Austin, TX 78711-3326 Toll Free: (888)782-8477; (800)735-2988 (TTY) Website: <a href="http://www.puc.texas.gov">www.puc.texas.gov</a> Email: <a href="mailto:customer@puc.texas.gov">customer@puc.texas.gov</a>

**Reporting Outages:** If you need to report a power outage or emergency, please contact your appropriate transmission and distribution service provider (TDSP) listed below:

ONCOR Electric Deliver	(888)313-4747
CenterPoint Energy	(800)332-7143 or (713)207-2222
Texas New Mexico Power	(888)866-7456
AEP Texas Central Company or AEP Texas North Company	(866)223-8508

### Obtaining and Canceling Service

**Unauthorized Change of Service Provider or “Slamming”:** Slamming is the term used for switching your electric service without your permission, and violates PUCT Substantive Rule 25.495. Your service provider should not change without your consent to the change, and Volt EP is committed to work with the PUCT, TDSP, and any other affected REP’s to resolve the issue. If you feel your service has been switched without your authorization, you should contact us and request that we provide you with a copy of your authorization and verification. We must submit this to you within 5 business days of your request. If you are not satisfied with this response, you may also file a complaint with the PUCT at the address above. Upon receipt of a complaint filed with the PUCT, Volt EP must respond within 21 days of receipt of the complaint, providing all documentation relied upon to support the authorization to switch,

and any corrective actions taken to date, if any. If we are serving your account without proper authorization, we will work with other market participants to take all actions necessary to return you to your original REP as quickly as possible.

Your original REP has the right to bill you at the price disclosed in your terms of service from either: 1) the date you are returned to your original REP, or 2) any prior date chosen by your original REP for which that REP had the authorization to serve you. We will, within five days from the date that your service is returned to your original REP, refund all charges paid for the time period the original REP ultimately bills you. In addition, we will pay all charges associated with returning your service to your REP of choice. For periods that are not billed to you by your original REP, we may bill you, but at a rate no higher than the rate you would have been charged by your original REP.

**Low-Income Customers:** A customer who receives food stamps, Medicaid, AFDC or SSI from the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS) automatically qualifies for the LITE-UP Texas program.

Customers qualified for the LITE-UP Texas program are eligible to pay a required deposit that is greater than \$50 in two installments. The first installment shall be due no earlier than 10 days after the issuance of written notification and the second installment shall be due no earlier than 40 days after the issuance of written notification. Please call your affiliated REP if you believe you are eligible.

### **Billing Issues**

**Unauthorized Charges or “Cramming”:** Before any new charges are included on your electric bill, your REP must inform you of the product or service, all associated charges, and how these charges will be billed before they appear on your electric bill and obtain your consent for the product or service. If you believe your bill includes unauthorized charges, you may contact your REP to dispute such charges and may file a complaint with the PUCT. Your REP will not seek to terminate or disconnect your electric service for non-payment of an unauthorized charges or file an unfavorable credit report against you for disputed unpaid charges that are alleged to be unauthorized, unless the dispute is ultimately resolved against you. If the charges are determined to be unauthorized, your REP will cease charging you for the unauthorized service or product, remove the unauthorized charge from your bill, and refund or credit all money you paid for any unauthorized charge within 45 days. If charges are not refunded or credited within three billing cycles, interest shall be paid to you at an annual rate established by the PUCT on the amount of any unauthorized charge until it is refunded or credited.

You may request all billing records under the REP's control related to any unauthorized charge within 15 days after the date the unauthorized charge is removed from your bill. Your REP will not re-bill you for any charges determined to be unauthorized.

**Deferred Payment Plans and Other Payment Arrangements:** If you cannot pay your bill, please call us immediately. We may offer you a short-term payment arrangement that allows you to pay your bill after you due date, but before your next bill is due. In addition, you may qualify for a “deferred payment plan.” A deferred payment plan allows you to pay an outstanding bill in installments that extend beyond the due date of the next bill. Volt EP must offer you a deferred payment plan for bills that become due during an extreme weather emergency; when a state of disaster has been declared by the governor that covers your area; and if you have been under-billed. Volt EP will make a deferred payment plan available, upon request, for a bill that becomes due in July, August, or September for certain customers or for bills that become due in January or February if there was an extreme weather emergency declared in the prior month. Your Terms of Service document provides more detail about these deferred payment plans and you may read more about them in PUC Subst. R. 25.480. A switch-hold may be applied if you participate in any of these alternative payment plans.

Volt EP also offers an average payment plan, which allows you to pay approximately the same monthly amount for electric service subject to a quarterly adjustment based on actual consumption. Average monthly billing is calculated by adding the current month's usage with the previous 11 month's usage, adding an escalation factor of 4%, dividing by twelve, and applying current prices to your average usage. This program is available to either a customer receiving the LITE-UP discount or any customer who is not currently delinquent in payment to Volt EP and that meets our eligibility requirements. We will reconcile your account to determine whether you will receive a credit or will be required to make payment. This reconciliation will occur (1) at a minimum at the end of every twelve (12) months that you are on average billing, (2) if you are past due on any monthly bill, (3) if you cancel your service, or (4) if you switch to conventional billing. In the event the Terms of Service are canceled or terminated or your electric service is disconnected, the average payment plan option does not affect your obligation to pay for all actual usage.

**Financial and Energy Assistance:** REPs must offer bill payment assistance to customers who express an inability to pay or need assistance with the bill payment. REPs must also offer level or average payment plans. An electric customer who receives food stamps, Medicaid, AFDC or SSI from the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS) or whose household income is not more than 125% of the federal poverty guidelines may qualify for energy assistance from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA). You may contact TDHCA by emailing your questions to [info@tdhca.state.tx.us](mailto:info@tdhca.state.tx.us), calling 1-800-525-0657, faxing 1-800-733-5120 or writing to TDHCA, P.O. Box 13941, Austin, TX, 78711-3941.

**Meter or Service Outage Issues:** Volt EP will assist you with any meter or service outage issues by providing you with the appropriate information to get the issues resolved with your TDSP. You may receive this information by calling Volt EP's Customer Care or by calling your TDSP (information provided in "Reporting a Power Outage" section of this document). You have the right to receive instructions on how to read your meter. You have the right to have your meter tested pursuant to Public Utility Commission rule 25.124, or in accordance with the tariffs of the TDSP, municipally owned utility, or electric cooperative as applicable.

If you suspect the meter reading is faulty or otherwise inaccurate, we will assist you in requesting a meter re-read or a meter test, as appropriate. You have a right to have the meter located at your premise tested once every four years at no cost to you. If the meter has been tested more than once in a four year period, and the meter is determined to be functioning properly, then you may be charged a fee for the additional meter test(s) at the rate approved for your TDSP. The TDSP will advise you of the test results, including the test date, testing person and, if applicable, the removal date of the meter. Your TDSP may revise your meter reading and you may be required to pay additional amounts if your meter is found to be malfunctioning.

### **Termination and Disconnection of Electric Service**

**Termination of Service:** Your REP may terminate your electric service for reasons other than non-payment as specified in your Terms of Service. If you do not obtain service from another REP prior to the termination date, you will be transferred to the POLR in your area. Your current REP will mail you a separate Termination Notice no earlier than the first day after the date your bill is due. The termination date will be 10 days from the date the notice is issued and may not fall on a holiday or weekend.

Your REP cannot terminate your contract for any of the following reasons: (1) failure to pay for electric service by a previous occupant of the premise if that occupant is not of the same household, (2) failure to pay any charge unrelated to electric service, (3) failure to pay a different type or class of electric service not included on the account's bill when service was initiated, (4) failure to pay under-billed charges that occurred for more than six months(except theft of service), (5) failure to pay any disputed charges until your REP or the PUCT determines the

accuracy of the charges and you have been notified of this determination, (6) failure to pay charges arising from an under-billing due to faulty metering (unless the meter was tampered with); or (7) failure to pay an estimated bill unless the estimated bill is part of a pre-approved meter-reading program or in the event the local distribution company is unable to read the meter due to circumstances beyond its control.

**Disconnection of Service (If you are a prepaid customer, please refer to your Prepaid Disclosure Statement for time frame and payment requirements):** The PUCT has provided that, under certain dangerous circumstances (such as unsafe electric line situations), a REP may authorize your TDSP to disconnect your electric service without prior notice to you. Additionally, a REP may seek to have your electric service disconnected for any of the reasons listed below: (1) failure to pay a bill owed to the REP, or to make a deferred payment arrangement by the date of disconnection, (2) failure to comply with the terms of a deferred payment agreement made with the REP, (3) using service in a manner that interferes with the service of others or the operations of non-standard equipment, (4) failure to pay a deposit required by the REP, and/or (5) failure of the guarantor to pay the amount guaranteed when the REP has a written agreement, signed by the guarantor, which allows for disconnection of the guarantor's service. Prior to disconnecting your service for non-payment, the REP must provide you a Disconnection Notice. This notice must be mailed to you separately no earlier than the first day after the date your bill is due. The disconnection date must be 10 days from the date the notice is issued and may not fall on a holiday or weekend or the day preceding unless their personnel are available to take payments and service can be reconnected.

If, however, you have a Chronic Condition Residential Customer designation, you and any secondary contact listed on the PUCT-approved application form will receive written notice of the REP's intent to disconnect service no later than 21 days prior to the date that service will be disconnected. The REP may not seek to have your electric service disconnected by your TDSP for any of the reasons listed under the Termination of Service portion of this document. Additionally, the REP may not disconnect your electric service: (1) if it receives notification by the disconnection date that an energy assistance provider will be forwarding sufficient payment on your account, (2) for non-payment during an extreme weather emergency and must offer you a deferred payment plan for bills due during the emergency, or (3) for non-payment if you inform the REP, prior to the disconnection date stated on the notice, that you or another resident on the premises is a Critical Care Residential Customer. However, to obtain this exemption, you must enter into a deferred payment plan with the REP and have the Critical Care Residential Customer's attending physician contact the REP and submit a written statement attesting to the necessity of electric service to support life. This exemption from disconnection shall be in effect for 63 days and may be applied for again after the 63 days has expired and the deferred payment plan has been fulfilled.

**Restoration of Service (If you are a prepaid customer, please refer to your Prepaid Disclosure Statement for time frame and payment requirements):** If your service has been disconnected by the REP for non-payment, the REP will, upon satisfactory correction of the reasons for the disconnection, notify your TDSP to reconnect your service. The REP will continue to serve you under the Terms of Service in effect prior to issuance of the Disconnection Notice. If your service was disconnected due to a dangerous situation, your service will be reconnected once you notify your REP that you have corrected and satisfactorily resolved the dangerous situation.

### **Disputes with Your Provider**

**Complaint Resolution:** Please contact your REP if you have specific comments, questions or complaints. Upon receipt of a complaint, your REP must investigate and notify you of the results within 21 days. If you are dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, you may request a supervisory review. Your REP must advise you of the results of the supervisory review within 10 business days of your request. If you are dissatisfied with the results of the investigation or supervisory review, you may file a complaint with the PUCT and the Office of Attorney General,

Consumer Protection Division. For a complaint involving a disputed bill, your REP may not initiate collection activities, termination or disconnection activities or report the delinquency to a credit reporting agency with respect to the disputed portion of the bill. However, after appropriate notice, your REP may send a disconnection notice for non-payment of any undisputed portion of the bill.

## **Other Protections**

**Critical Care or Chronic Condition Residential Customer:** You have a right to apply for Critical Care Residential Customer designation if you have a person permanently residing in your premise who has been diagnosed by a physician as being dependent upon an electric-powered medical device to sustain life. If you have a person permanently residing in your premise who has been diagnosed by a physician as having a serious medical condition that requires an electric-powered medical device or electric heating or cooling to prevent the impairment of a major life function through a significant deterioration or exacerbation of the condition, you may apply for designation as a Chronic Condition Residential Customer. To be considered for such designation, the PUCT-approved form must be submitted by facsimile or other electronic means to the TDSP by a physician. The TDSP will notify you of the final status of your designation as a Critical Care or Chronic Condition Residential Customer, and will notify you when such designation will expire and whether you will receive a renewal notice. The TDSP will also notify us about your status.

**Do Not Call List:** Beginning January 1, 2002, customers may add their name, address and telephone number to a state-sponsored electric no-call list that is intended to limit the number of telemarketing calls received relating to the customer's choice of REPs. Customers have the right to register their address and phone number to a No Call List sponsored by the PUCT to opt out of telemarketing calls according to PUCT Subst. R. 25.484. You may register either online at [www.texasnocall.com](http://www.texasnocall.com) for free; or call toll-free 1-866-TXNOCAL(L) (1-866-896-6225) to obtain an application or to register; or send a written request for an application to: TEXAS NO CALL, P.O. Box 313, E. Walpole, MA 02032.

You must pay a registration fee for each phone number you register; this fee must be paid by credit card if registering by phone and by credit card, check or money order if registering via mail. The registration fee, cannot exceed five dollars per term. Your registration will remain active for five years from the date it was first published on the list. A customer that registers for inclusion on the electric no-call list may continue to receive calls from telemarketers other than REPs. The customer may instead or may also register for the Texas no-call list that is intended to limit telemarketing calls regarding consumer goods and services in general, including electric service.

**Language Availability:** You may request to receive information from your REP in Spanish, or any language in which you were solicited. This includes the Terms of Service Agreement, Electricity Facts Label, Invoices, bill notices, information on new electric services, discount programs, promotions, and access to customer assistance. This document and any termination/disconnection notices are required to be bilingual.

**Privacy Rights:** All REPs are prohibited from disclosing or selling any confidential customer information, including: your name, address, account number, type or classification of service, historical electricity usage, expected patterns of use, types of facilities used in providing service, individual contract terms and conditions, price, current charges or billing records. This prohibition does not apply to the release of your information under certain circumstances as required by law, including a release of your information to the PUCT, an agent of your REP, credit reporting agencies, law enforcement agencies or your TDSP. In addition, this prohibition does not apply to the release of prior historical usage upon request and authorization of a current customer or applicant of a premise.

**Availability of Provider of Last Resort (POLR):** If your electric service is terminated or disconnected, you may obtain services from another REP or the POLR. The POLR offers a basic, standard retail service package at a fixed, non-discountable rate. You may call 1-866-PWR-4-TEX or visit [www.powertochoose.org](http://www.powertochoose.org) for more information about the default POLR in your area.

**Special Services:** Your REP may offer special services for hearing-impaired customers and programs for customers with physical disabilities. If you have a physical disability or require special assistance regarding your electric account, please contact your REP to inquire about the process to become qualified for any of these special services.