



QUESTIONS TO ASK
BEFORE CHANGING
YOUR
GAS, ELECTRIC OR
TELEPHONE
COMPANY



Freedom of Choice

Customer choice can provide many benefits, including new choices for products and services.

Electricity: Electricity competition began in the District of Columbia in 2001, giving you the opportunity to choose the company that provides your electricity. As the local utility, Pepco continues delivering electricity to your home or business, regardless of which electricity supplier you choose. And Pepco still maintains the power lines and responds to your emergency and routine service calls.

Gas: Due to deregulation in 1999, you now have the option of buying natural gas from other natural gas suppliers or you may choose to continue buying your natural gas directly from Washington Gas. Either way, it's your choice.



Phone: Current market conditions may limit the number of suppliers offering phone service in the District. Once these conditions start to improve, you can expect to hear more from these suppliers about their competitive rates, products and services. At this time, we encourage you to continue gathering information and educating yourself about competition.

Questions to Ask Before Changing Your Gas, Electric, or Telephone Company

- 1) Does the Public Service Commission approve the company to market its services in DC?
- 2) How long have they been in business and what assurance do they give that service will be reliable?
- 3) What is their customer service history in areas where they are in business?
- 4) Will the company maintain a local business office that handles inquiries and payments?
- 5) Can I get a consolidated bill for my service? Is there an associated fee for a consolidated bill?
- 6) What will my bill look like, who will send it, when will it arrive and when will it be due?
- 7) Who do you call and what is the process to resolve a service or billing problem or complaint?
- 8) Is help available 24 hours a day, 365 days per year via a local or toll-free number?
- 9) Will you be given a copy of the contract in writing with all terms and services clearly identified before you are asked to sign?
- 10) Do I have the right to cancel the contract at no cost to me if I change my mind within a short time of signing?
- 11) Will my personal information remain private or does the company resell its customer list to mass marketers and telemarketers?

Don't forget there are a few other details:

- What fees apply if a payment is late or if the contract is canceled early?
- Is a budget payment plan available?
- If the bill is estimated when will an actual meter reading be conducted or required?

About OPC

The Office of the People's Counsel is the public advocate for all natural gas, electric and telecommunications ratepayers in the District of Columbia. By law, the Office represents ratepayer's interests before the Public Service Commission and other utility regulatory bodies. The Office is mandated to conduct consumer education and outreach and assists consumers with complaints related to their utility service.



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