



Liberty™

News for our Natural Gas Customers

Special Protections Edition



MA



November/December 2022

How to Reach Us

Emergencies

1-800-936-7000

1-508-883-9516 (Blackstone Legacy Customers)

Customer Service/Billing/ Payments


1-800-544-4944

1-508-883-9516 (Blackstone Legacy Customers)

www.libertyenergyandwater.com

Stay Connected with Us

 @ LibertyMassachusettsGas

 @ Liberty_MA_Gas

Customer Walk-In Centers

Currently closed due to COVID-19.

- 36 Fifth Street, Fall River, MA 02720
- 61 Main Street, Blackstone, MA 01504
(former Blackstone customers only)

Bill Payment Locations

Payments can be made multiple ways, including using the drop boxes located at our walk in centers, online or by phone. Visit www.libertyenergyandwater.com to make a payment and to view a complete list of ways you can pay your bill.

Income Eligible Assistance

Fall River/Westport/Somerset/Swansea:
Citizens for Citizens: 1-508-679-0041

North Attleboro/Plainville:
Self Help, Inc.: 1-508-226-4192

Blackstone/South Bellingham/Wrentham:
Southern Middlesex Opportunity Council:
1-800-286-6776

NEW Budget Billing Program

With traditional Budget Billing, your estimated monthly amount due is calculated based on your average monthly bill from the previous twelve months. Because the cost of gas was likely lower when the average was calculated, many customers on our traditional Budget Billing program were charged less than what was needed to account for the increased cost of gas. This can often lead to unpaid balances at each review period, which happens at six and nine months, and can often pose a financial hardship for customers.

To avoid customers receiving potentially large, unpaid balances during review periods, we have introduced a new option called Levelized Budget Billing. With Levelized Budget Billing, Liberty calculates your monthly payment based a rolling 12-month history. Since we recalculate your average each month, no balance settle-up or review is required. However, the budget amount will vary slightly from month to month. Customers can sign up for Levelized Budget Billing in My Account, or by calling us at 1-800-544-4944. Blackstone legacy customers do not currently have access to My Account and can sign up by calling customer service at 1-508-883-9516.

Payment Arrangements

Liberty offers convenient payment arrangements for managing past due balances. Once a good faith payment is made to the account, the remaining balance can be spread out over a period of two to six months. The monthly payment will be calculated based on the past due amount plus any charges accrued during the current billing cycle. To establish a payment arrangement on your account, please contact Customer Care at 1-800-544-4944. Blackstone legacy customers should call 1-508-883-9516.

Payments at Payment Stations

To protect yourself and your natural gas service, please use caution when paying your bill in person at a third-party payment center. Some local stores may accept utility payments as a courtesy to their customers, but we cannot guarantee that payments made at unauthorized locations will be posted to your account on time or even received by Liberty. Authorized pay stations can be found on our website at www.libertyenergyandwater.com. Also, it is a good idea to always keep your receipt in case you must verify a payment.

NOTE: Blackstone legacy customers are not yet able to pay using third-party payment centers.

Have You Been Affected?

The rising cost of gas has caused financial hardship for many people. We want to make sure customers take advantage of programs available to them. From calling us for a payment arrangement, to contacting Mass Save® and getting a no-cost Home Energy Assessment, reducing costs and setting a budget will help ease some financial stress. With increased income guidelines, people who didn't qualify for fuel assistance in the past may now be eligible. Other programs, such as the Good Neighbor Energy Fund, offer assistance for people in temporary financial crisis who do not qualify for state or federal aid. Call 2-1-1 for a list of statewide programs, your local CAP agency (listed on the front) for fuel assistance programs, or call us for a payment arrangement.

Third Party Notification Service

Liberty offers customers a service known as "Third Party Notification." This service allows Liberty, with your permission, to notify a friend, relative or neighbor if your gas bill is overdue. This is particularly helpful for those who would like a reminder to pay their bill or who may need help managing their bills. The person you select as your "third party" is not responsible for paying your bill, only for reminding you to pay it if it becomes overdue. If you are interested in this service, please call Customer Care at (800) 544-4944 to request a Third Party Notification Service form.

For Customers Requesting Protected Status

In Massachusetts, if everyone living in your home is 65 years old or older OR if the only other resident of your home under the age of 65 is a minor, you are eligible for special protection from the termination of your natural gas service as a result of past-due balances on your account.

There are other protections as well. Your natural gas service cannot be shut off, or will be restored, if you provide certification to Liberty that you are unable to pay any overdue bill because of financial hardship, and:

- Someone living in your home is seriously ill; or
- A child under 12 months old lives in your home; or
- Between November 15th and March 15th natural gas is used as your primary heating fuel and your service was not shut off for non-payment before November 15th.

It is the customer's responsibility to contact Liberty to apply for protected status. Contact Customer Care at (800) 544-4944 for more information on how to apply.

Arrearage Management Program (AMP)

Liberty's Arrearage Management Program (AMP) provides financial assistance to eligible low-income customers with active accounts that have outstanding bills. Under the AMP program, eligible low-income customers may qualify for forgiveness of past due utility bills, and program participants receive monthly credits to their past due account once all the program requirements have been met (some restrictions may apply). Participation in the Arrearage Management Program and forgiveness of the past due balance is extended only once, unless extenuating circumstances have occurred.

Benefit - For customers with a past due balance of \$300 or more, the Company forgives \$250 monthly for each payment made on time (annual cap of \$3,000 per participant), unless the remaining balance is less than \$100. These credits are displayed as a separate line item on the customer's bill.

Eligibility - The following eligibility guidelines must be met to qualify for the Arrearage Management Program (AMP):

- Must be the customer of record at the premise (not a landlord account);
- The customer of record must reside at the location where the utility service is provided;
- Must have outstanding bills with a minimum of \$300.00 in arrears and sixty (60) days past due;
- Must be eligible for the company's low-income discount rate; and
- Must not be shutoff for non-payment.

Program Requirements - Customers approved for the AMP program must:

1. Enter into a monthly budget that includes current bill amount and future projected bills for the term of the budget less any projected fuel assistance payments.
2. Pay the monthly amount agreed to in order to receive the monthly AMP credit. After six (6) months, your budget will be reviewed and may be adjusted to reflect changes in gas costs or your actual usage for this six-month period. You will be notified if the budget amount will be changed.
3. Apply for, and agree to participate in, all other financial assistance programs available (e.g. fuel assistance, weatherization/conservation, etc.).

Failure to pay the monthly amount agreed to will result in termination of the budget agreement, and any remaining AMP benefit will be forfeited. The AMP budget may be reinstated if all missed payments along with the current payments are made. **You may apply for this program by calling Customer Care at (800) 544-4944.**