**Section 280.160 Dispute Procedures**

a) A utility shall assign to one or more of its personnel in each of its offices where it transacts business with the public, the duty of hearing, in person, any dispute by an applicant, customer or user. Such personnel shall consider the complainant's allegations and shall explain the complainant's account and utility's contentions in connection therewith. Such personnel shall be authorized to act on behalf of the utility in resolving the complaint and shall be available during all business hours for the duty hereinbefore described.

b) Where any dispute between a utility and an applicant, customer or user cannot be resolved between the parties, each utility shall direct its personnel engaged in personal contact with the applicant, customer or user seeking such dispute resolution under the provisions of this Part, to inform him/her, if he/she expresses nonacceptance of the decision of such personnel, of his/her right to have the problem considered and acted upon by supervisory personnel of the utility. Each utility shall further direct such supervisory personnel to inform such an applicant, customer, or user who expresses nonacceptance of the decision of such supervisory personnel, of his/her right to have the problem reviewed by the Commission, and shall furnish him/her with the telephone number and address of the Consumer Assistance Section of the Illinois Commerce Commission.

c) When a customer disputes a particular bill, a utility shall not discontinue service for nonpayment so long as the customer

1) pays the undisputed portion of the bill or an amount equal to last year's bill at the location for the same period normalized for weather, whichever is greater; and

2) pays all future periodic bills by the due date; and

3) enters into bona fide discussions with the utility to settle the dispute with dispatch.

d) Only net rates shall be charged on any disputed bill paid within fourteen days of resolution of the dispute if the complaint was filed before the bill became past due.