**Section 280.200 Tampering**

a) Intent: Tampering with utility wires, pipes, meters or other service equipment is prohibited. The intent of this Section is to describe the process by which the utility shall bill the customer for the unauthorized usage when the utility has proof that the customer benefitted from tampering.

b) Proof: The utility has the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that tampering has occurred with the utility's wires, pipes, meters or other service equipment, that the customer has benefitted from the tampering, and that the utility's billing is reasonable.

c) Investigation: When the utility has reason to suspect that tampering has occurred, it shall investigate without delay.

d) Notice to Customer: Once the utility has full proof of the tampering, it shall report to the customer the details of the investigation.

e) Remedy: As soon as the condition becomes known to the utility, it shall take steps to correct the condition and issue a corrected bill without delay. Pursuant to any tariffed meter tampering charge, before assessing the charge, the utility shall review the situation to determine if the person benefitting from the tampering was responsible either directly or indirectly for the tampering.

f) Timing: If tampering evidence extends to previous customers of record, the current customer shall not have to pay for the portions of the unauthorized usage that are attributable to the previous customers.

g) Record Keeping: The utility shall document and record the evidence that proves the tampering, and it shall save the full evidence proving the tampering for a minimum of three years from the date that the customer is issued a corrected bill for the tampering.