

4.800 CAMPGROUND SUBMETERING**4.801 Authority**

Vermont Statutes Annotated, Title 30, section 249a authorizes a recreational campground to provide submetered electric service to campground users on a nonprofit basis. Such service must be provided in accordance with rules adopted by the Public Utility Commission. This rule establishes the standards for such submetered service in campgrounds.

4.802 Definitions

- (1) "Campground" means a tract or parcel of land occupied by more than three campers for a brief period for vacational or recreational purposes, whether or not as part of a commercial operation. A camper may camp in an automobile trailer, a recreational vehicle, a tent or a temporary cabin, but not in a mobile home that is used as a residence.
- (2) "Customer" means the ultimate customer of a campground who rents or uses space at a campground and whose electricity is submetered.
- (3) "Average cost per KWH" for a campground means the bill for electric power delivered to the campground's master meter (excluding charges for disconnection, late payment, or other similar service charges) divided by the KWH so delivered, and rounded to the nearest tenth of a cent per KWH.

4.803 Meters

- (A) In any campground that sells electricity through submetering, customer submeters shall be provided, installed and maintained by the campground.
- (B) All meters shall meet any applicable building codes or other local ordinances. Each customer's meter shall be visible to the customer. Customer submeters shall provide service for the customer's site only, and not for any common facility such as lighting for roadways or common buildings.
- (C) Meters shall be calibrated when initially placed in service and at least every 24 months thereafter. Calibration may be performed by a licensed electrician, an electric utility, or any other entity authorized by the Public Utility Commission to perform this function. The cost of calibration will be paid by the campground. The calibration shall be noted on the meter itself or recorded in a calibration log. Calibration records shall be available on request at each campground to customers and to the Department of Public Service and the Public Utility Commission.
- (D) When submeters are calibrated, they shall be set as closely as possible to a condition of zero error. Whenever an inspection, calibration or other test discloses that a submeter has an error of more than two percent, it shall be adjusted, repaired, or replaced. Any submeter that is removed from service and replaced by another submeter shall be tested and adjusted before it is again placed in service.

4.804 Rates

- (A) Whenever a campground charges customers for electricity, the charge shall be based upon the customer's measured kilowatt-hour (KWH) usage.

- (B) Rates charged to customers shall not exceed the campground's most current average cost per KWH for the relevant seasonal rate period. Rates shall be recalculated each month based upon the most recent bill received at the campground. The campground may apply those rates for a calendar month thereafter.
- (1) For example, assume that a utility's off-peak season extends from April 1 to October 31, that the utility bills on a calendar month basis and sends bills out on the fifth of the month, and that the campground also bills for submetered electricity on a calendar month basis. The utility's summer period begins on April 1, but on May 1, the last "summer rate period" bill on hand at the campground would normally be from the preceding October. Therefore, in setting the submetering rate for May, the campground would measure its own costs from the preceding October. By June, however, the campground would use data from the bill sent out by the utility on May 5 (for April usage).
- (C) Customers shall not be required to prepay separately for expected electric usage. However, this paragraph does not prohibit a campground from requiring prepayment for use of a campsite, and then crediting the customer's electric bill with some or all of the amount prepaid.

4.805 Registration of Customers

Each campground customer who will pay a separate electric charge shall be provided with a written statement (which need not be separate) when the customer registers stating:

- (1) that electricity used at the customer's site will be billed to the customer;
- (2) that electricity used for common areas and common facilities will be the responsibility of the campground;
- (3) the current rate charged for electricity, per KWH;
- (4) the initial meter reading for the assigned site; and
- (5) a summary of complaint procedures.

4.806 Bills

- (A) Customers may be billed at checkout for actual electric usage, based upon the customer's report of the meter reading or upon the campground's reading of the meter.
- (B) Notwithstanding subsection (A), customers who anticipate staying at the same site for more than seven days may be billed on a weekly or monthly basis for actual electric usage. Customers who anticipate staying at the same site for 30 days or more shall be billed at least monthly. Weekly or monthly customers shall be billed promptly after meters are read.
- (C) A customer's electric bill shall contain the following:
- (1) the initial KWH reading and date for the current billing period;
 - (2) the final KWH reading and date for the current billing period;

- (3) the applicable rate;
 - (4) the amount due; and
 - (5) a statement that payment is due immediately or a date on which payment is due.
- (D) On request of a customer who has been or will be billed for electric usage, a campground shall show the customer the campground's utility bill from which the campground's current average cost per KWH has been calculated.
- (E) A campground may provide customers with a budget billing plan under which charges are averaged over time.

4.807 Bill Adjustments

- (A) Where a billing adjustment is necessary due to meter error or other causes, the adjustment shall not apply earlier than the beginning of the current camping season. If the error has a known beginning date after the beginning of the current camping season, that beginning date shall be used.
- (B) A campground may make adjustments for fast, slow, stopped, tampered or removed meters based upon the customer's actual usage during a period when the meter was accurate, either before or after the period when the meter was not accurate. If no period can be found when the meter was accurate, an adjustment can be made based upon all relevant information about the customer and upon average usage of customers who are similarly equipped. Any bill based on estimated usage shall be clearly marked as such.

4.808 Complaints

- (A) A customer may complain orally or in writing to the campground about any bill and may request a conference on that bill. A complaint shall state the customer's name, location, and the general nature of the complaint.
- (B) Upon receiving a complaint, a campground shall:
- (1) record the complaint in a complaint log, which shall be made available to customers and the Department of Public Service for inspection at reasonable times;
 - (2) promptly, thoroughly and completely investigate the complaint and confer with the complainant as needed.
 - (3) notify the complainant in writing of the results of the investigation and any proposed action.
- (C) Complaints not resolved by the campground may be brought to the Consumer Affairs Division of the Department of Public Service. If not resolved there, complaints may be brought to the Public Utility Commission.

