

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

A N A C T

RELATING TO PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS -- DUTIES OF UTILITIES AND CARRIERS

Introduced By: Senator Roger Picard

Date Introduced: March 02, 2017

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 39-2 of the General Laws entitled "Duties of Utilities and Carriers"
2 is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **39-2-26. Entry onto premises to examine and maintain gas or electric meters.**

4 (a) An agent of a gas or eclectic public utility, who is authorized by the public utility and
5 who displays an identification card in accordance with §39-2-19, may, at any reasonable time,
6 enter any premises supplied with gas or electricity by such public utility for the purpose of
7 installing, examining, repairing, servicing, reading and/or removing the meters, pipes, wires,
8 fittings and/or other apparatus for supplying or regulating the supply of gas or electricity and of
9 ascertaining the quantity of gas or electricity consumed or supplied.

10 (b) If any person, directly or indirectly, prevents or hinders the public utility's agent from
11 entering a premises for the reasons mentioned in subsection (a) of this section, the public utility
12 authorizing the agent may, within one year from the date of the prevention or hindrance, make
13 complaint to any court or magistrate authorized to issue process, who may thereupon issue a
14 warrant directed to an authorized Rhode Island process server or to a law enforcement official in
15 the municipality in which the premises are located, commanding the process server or law
16 enforcement official to take sufficient aid and repair to such premises accompanied by a duly
17 authorized agent of the public utility, who shall install, examine and/or read the meters, pipes,
18 wires, fittings and/or other apparatus for supplying or regulating the supply of gas or electricity,

1 and ascertain the quantity of gas or electricity consumed or supplied therein, and shall, if required
2 or consistent with utility practices to prevent and/or reduce the risk of any future safety concerns
3 and/or gas or electric losses to the public utility, repair, service and/or remove any meters, pipes,
4 wires, fittings and/or other apparatus belonging to the public utility, or to the customer if such
5 meters, pipes, wires, fittings and/or other apparatus are being used by the customer or the
6 customer's tenant to acquire unauthorized gas or electric service from the public utility.

7 (c) In the event of:

8 (1) An outage or emergency repair; or

9 (2) A fire, explosion or other disaster or potential disaster, firefighters and police officers
10 shall permit any agent of the public utility, who is authorized by the public utility and who
11 displays an identification card in accordance with §39-2-19, to enter any area or building in order
12 to shut off the gas or electricity, which is or may become a source of danger to the public.

13 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

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1 This act would permit agents of gas or electric public utilities to enter premises supplied
2 with gas or electricity to install, examine, repair, service, read and/or remove meters or other
3 apparatus. Further, this act would allow a court to issue a warrant to enter the premises to replace
4 the risk of future safety concerns and/or ascertain the quantity of gas of electricity consumer or
5 supplied. Further, in the case of an emergency, firefighters and police officers are required to
6 permit entry by agents of the public utility into the premises to shut off gas or electricity.

7 This act would take effect upon passage.

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