

Your Rights as a Cable Subscriber

In Wisconsin, you have certain rights as a cable television subscriber. Section 134.42, Wis. Stats., provides that:

1. In case of a service interruption that does not involve a natural disaster, you are entitled to have your service restored within 72 hours after you report the interruption or request repair.
2. You are entitled to a full day credit on your bill for any service interruption caused by your cable operator which lasts more than four hours in one day. If the interruption is not caused by the cable operator, you are entitled to a credit for each hour service is interrupted if the interruption is longer than four hours. You are not entitled to these credits unless you notify the cable operator of the interruption and request a credit.
3. Except in cases beyond the control of the cable operator, you are entitled to 30 days advance written notice before a program service is deleted or a rate increase is put into effect.
4. Your service cannot be disconnected unless your cable bill is at least 45 days past due and you have been given at least a 10-day advance written notice of the disconnection—except in cases of cable theft or to prevent signal leakage.

The Bureau of Consumer Protection and your local district attorney are authorized by law to seek penalties from the cable company increases where you have been denied these legal rights. However, the ability to proceed is dependent on your knowledge of these rights and your

willingness to bring forward complaints.

Cable service interruption

If you experience problems with your cable television service, take the following steps:

1. Call the cable operator immediately to report a service interruption and request that service be restored.
2. Make a note of the date and time you placed the call and the name of the person to whom you spoke.
3. Request a credit for any interruptions over four hours in duration. Note the exact date and time during which any interruption occurred.
4. Complete the attached form or send a short letter to the cable operator that contains the items recorded in your notes.

Rate increase/program service deletion

You must receive a 30-day notice before a rate increase is put into effect or a program service is deleted. The federal cable act also gives the Federal Communications Commission the right to establish standards and rules for basic service rates and for unreasonable rates in non-basic services, although it may take some time to establish these standards.

Your service cannot be disconnected unless your cable bill is at least 45 days past due and you have been

given at least a 10-day advance written notice of the disconnection. No advance notice needs to be given if the disconnection is to prevent signal leakage or cable theft.

Keep good records

If your service is not restored within 72 hours, you do not receive the proper credit for a service interruption, or you experience other problems related to your cable service, contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection. Be sure to include the following:

- Copies of your notes and any other written correspondence you sent to the cable company or correspondence the cable company sent to you.
- Copies of all billing records and notices you received from the cable company. Send the entire statement if possible, not just the portion you keep for your records.
- Copies of advertisements or other promotional material.
- Copies of disconnection notices.

For more information, or to file a complaint, contact the Bureau of Consumer Protection at:

(800) 422-7128

FAX: (608) 224-4939

TTY: (608) 224-5058

E-MAIL:
datcpHotline@datcp.state.wi.us

WEBSITE:
<http://datcp.state.wi.us/>