

COVID-19 RESOURCE CENTER

BC Hydro Tariff Amendments to Address COVID-19

April 7, 2020

On April 2, 2020, the provincial government of British Columbia approved an [Order in Council](#) issuing a Direction to the British Columbia Utilities Commission (the “**Utilities Commission**”). Pursuant to this Direction, the Utilities Commission must approve certain amendments to the electric tariffs of the BC Hydro and Power Authority (“**BC Hydro**”), enabling certain relief to be granted to BC Hydro’s eligible residential, small business and industrial customers, on account of COVID-19.

A brief summary of the relief offered by these amendments are set out below.

Residential Customers

- **Eligibility:** Residential customers¹ are eligible for relief if the customer, or their partner/spouse, is unable to work due to COVID-19 (due to loss of employment, being quarantined or sick with COVID-19, caring for a family member that is sick with COVID-19, or caring for children that require supervision due to school or daycare closure).
- **Relief Offered:** Eligible residential customers will receive a bill credit of three times their average monthly bill (with the average being calculated over the period of April 1, 2019 through March 31, 2020). The bill credit will be applied directly to the eligible customer’s account, and will not need to be repaid at a later date.
- **Application:** The application is expected to be available on BC Hydro’s website the week of April 6, 2020, and customers may apply for the credit anytime until June 30, 2020.

Small Business Customers

- **Eligibility:** Small business customers² are eligible for relief if they need to temporarily close their business on or after March 15, 2020 due to COVID-19 (either as a result of a government order or reduction in business).

¹ Receiving service under BC Hydro’s Rate Schedules 1101, 1105, 1107, 1121, 1127, 1148, 1151 and 1161. In its Application to the Utilities Commission, BC Hydro has stated that a customer taking service under these schedules will not be eligible for relief, however, if its average monthly consumption is greater than 2,500 kWh/month (which is equal to approximately three times the average monthly residential service account), in order to carve out large consumption accounts that fall outside typical residential household use (Application to Utilities Commission, April 3, 2020, p. 3).

² Receiving Small General Service under BC Hydro’s Rate Schedules 1205, 1234, 1300, 1301, 1310 or 1311. BC Hydro has stated in its Application to the Utilities Commission that certain accounts under these Rate Schedules will not be eligible for relief, however, if they do not fall within the commonly understood definition of a “small business”; for example, government agencies, public and private schools (including post-secondary), large retail and national companies, strata corporations, and unmetered services (Application to Utilities Commission, April 3, 2020, p. 5).

- **Relief offered:** Eligible small business customers will have their electricity charges waived from April 1, 2020 (or the date of their business closure, whichever is later) through to June 30, 2020. These amounts will not need to be repaid at a later date.
- **Application:** The application is expected to be available on BC Hydro's website the week of April 13, 2020 and customers may apply for the waiver anytime until June 30, 2020.

Industrial Customers

Industrial customers³ (including copper and coal mining customers) may also be eligible to defer 50% of their electricity bill payments for the billing period of March, 2020 to May, 2020. These amounts are repayable in the future (in nine months of equal payments), with interest.



Erica Miller
Associate
604 661 9328
emiller@farris.com
Bio

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³ Taking service under BC Hydro's Rate Schedules 1823 and 1828