



THE COLORADO PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF THE PUC?

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) is part of Colorado state government and is located within the Department of Regulatory Agencies. It was created in 1913 with the passage of the Public Utilities Act. The PUC has the task of regulating and overseeing public utilities in Colorado.

The PUC serves the public interest by effectively regulating utilities and facilities so that the people of Colorado receive safe, reliable and reasonably-priced services consistent with the economic, environmental and social values of our state.

WHAT DOES THE PUC REGULATE?

In accomplishing its mission and fulfilling its tasks, the PUC affects approximately 4.7 million Colorado citizens. The PUC oversees nearly \$8 billion in annual jurisdictional utility revenues for the gas, electric, telecom and water industries. State law gives the PUC the authority to regulate the rates and services of public utilities within the state. By law public utilities are defined as electrical, common carrier, pipeline, gas, telephone, telegraph, and water corporations which supply services to the public.

The PUC has full economic and quality of service authority over most intrastate telecommunications services, and investor-owned electric, gas and water utilities. The PUC has limited regulatory control over municipal utilities and electric associations, long-distance and wireless providers.

The PUC also regulates utilities that move, such as railroad and motor vehicle carriers that are for hire. The PUC's scope of authority varies depending on the type of transportation service being provided – ranging from full economic and quality of service jurisdiction for some passenger carriers, to safety and insurance registration only for other types of carriers.

In addition, the PUC also has safety jurisdiction over all public highway-rail crossings within Colorado.

To reach PUC Consumer Affairs:

1560 Broadway, Suite 250, Denver, CO 80202
303-894-2070 (local); 1-800-456-0858 (toll-free)
Dora_puc_complaints@state.co.us

Finally, the PUC is responsible for the administration of the following programs: the Telecommunications Relay Program; the Colorado High Cost Support Mechanism; the Low-Income Telephone Assistance program; the Highway Crossing Protection Fund, and the Colorado No-Call List.

HOW IS THE PUC ORGANIZED?

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) includes three members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate for a term of four years. A Director manages the staff and daily operations of the PUC. The agency has 93.5 staff members, who have specialized knowledge in engineering, economics, law, finance, support or management. The PUC is comprised of the following working sections and units:

The **FIXED UTILITIES** section is responsible for utility service affordability and availability. The section conducts financial, economic and engineering analyses, gas volume and compliance audits, energy supply and demand forecasts, securities approval, and special investigations to ensure that consumers pay fair prices and receive quality services.

The **TRANSPORTATION** section regulates the affordability, availability and safety of motor carriers transporting passengers for hire. The section conducts financial reviews, ensures fair and cost-based carrier rates; conducts audits and service complaint investigations; conducts driver qualification reviews and vehicle safety inspections; processes carrier applications; and issues permits, based on compliance with insurance and safety standards.

The **ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS** section consists of Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) and certified court reporters. ALJs establish procedural schedules, conduct hearings, and issue recommended decisions for all types of proceedings referred to them by the Commissioners. They also offer mediation services in connection with such proceedings. Court reporters make a stenographic record of testimony and legal argument presented at Commission hearings and, for a fee, will produce written transcripts of such testimony/argument if requested to do so.

The **CONSUMER AFFAIRS** unit resolves complaints between customers and regulated utility companies. It informs the public about PUC decisions and ratepayer issues through publications, an agency spokesperson and through community outreach.

The **POLICY ADVISORY** unit provides advice and technical training to the decision-makers of the Commission – the Commissioners and Administrative Law Judges. The internal support administrative team handles all filings by determining the timing, disposition and weekly agenda to ensure that all statutory deadlines are met.

The **RAIL/TRANSIT SAFETY** section is responsible for safety at all public highway-rail crossings in Colorado and is the State Safety Oversight Agency for rail fixed guideway systems. The Section conducts on-site safety inspections, accident investigations, and performs a complete audit of all transit agencies rail fixed guideway systems every three years.

The **GAS PIPELINE SAFETY** section ensures the safety of utility services, conducting gas pipeline safety inspections and accident investigations,

The **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES** section is responsible for fund administration, budget preparation, purchasing, central records control, business system administration, personnel, and administrative support.

The **RESEARCH AND EMERGING ISSUES** section advances policy discussions and Commission decisions concerning current and emerging issues that impact utilities and service providers regulated by the PUC and their customers. The team accomplishes this mission by initiating, facilitating, coordinating, and performing objective and balanced research and sharing the results of this work with the Commissioners and Staff.

HOW IS THE PUC FUNDED?

The PUC is funded with fees paid by the regulated companies and not by general tax revenue. Two-thirds of the funding comes from fees paid by regulated utilities. The other one-third comes from registration and permit fees charged to motor carriers, allowing them to operate in Colorado.

WHAT TYPES OF ASSISTANCE DOES THE PUC OFFER?

Utility customers have the right to file an informal or formal complaints with the Commission. Individuals, groups, and organizations may also intervene or participate in formal cases before the Commission, as well as testify at public hearings that the PUC holds across the state.

HOW DO I CONTACT THE PUC?

All correspondence to the PUC should be sent to the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, 1560 Broadway, Suite 250, Denver, CO 80202. For additional information about the PUC, visit our website at: www.dora.colorado.gov/puc.

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