



Control Number: 50664



Item Number: 66

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## SOUTHERN UTILITIES C O M P A N Y

218 North Broadway Ave.  
Tyler, Texas 75702-5710  
Phone: 903.593.2588

March 24, 2020

Chairman DeAnn T. Walker  
Commissioner Arthur C. D'Andrea  
Commissioner Shelly Botkin  
Public Utility Commission of Texas  
Central Records  
1701 N. Congress Avenue  
PO Box 13326  
Austin, Texas 78701

Re: Project No. 50664  
Issues Related to the State of Disaster for the Corona Virus Disease 2019

Dear Commissioners,

In response to the Public Utility Commission of Texas' (PUC) request for interested parties to inform the PUC of initiatives and related to COVID-19 (virus) in Project 50664, I am writing the Commission to describe the measures implemented by Southern Utilities Company (Southern) thus far.

Southern is committed to remaining vigilant and proactive in implementing measures to protect its employees, customers and the community in general from exposure to the virus. In furtherance of such efforts, Southern has implemented the following modified operations beginning March 16, 2020:

1) Effective on Monday, March 16, 2020, preliminary modified operations were implemented to limit public access to our billing office. These preliminary measures were initially implemented to provide Southern time to develop more comprehensive modified operations to address continued escalation of the number of individuals contracting the virus, which would certainly dictate more intensive modifications of operations. Please refer to the enclosed customer Notice which was posted at Southern's billing office limiting public access to between the hours of 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Only individuals placing application for water service at a location previously being served and individuals requesting water service at a new location where a meter tap is required were allowed limited access to Southern's billing office. All other business was transacted at Southern's two (2) drive-thru windows, including payment of monthly water billing statements. All customers were required to remain in their respective automobile for all transactions at Southern's drive-thru windows.

Office Fax  
903.593.1997

Field Office  
903.566.3511

Field Fax  
903.566.4740

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2) As expected, the number of individuals contracting the virus continued to escalate. Effective on Tuesday, March 24, 2020, Southern implemented more stringent modified operations. Please refer to the enclosed customer Notice of measures effective on Tuesday, March 24, 2020. Pursuant to the referenced Notice, public access is not allowed to Southern's billing office or Southern's field office. Southern's two (2) drive-thru windows will be open from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM for all transactions including payment of monthly billing statements. Customer inquiries and questions are to be initiated by telephone only. All customer applications and written requests will be transacted by either US Mail, email or fax.

3) In addition to posting the above referenced Notice of measures effective on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 in multiple locations at Southern's billing office and Southern's field office, the enclosed letter and a copy of said Notice was provided to all customers by US Mail.

4) Although public access is not allowed, Southern's billing office and Southern's field office will continue to be staffed for the period of modified operations.

5) Southern's service personnel will work from home and be dispatched from Southern's field office by either telephone or radio as necessary. Southern's service personnel will continue to physically read all water meters, respond to all customer service requests, respond to repair/maintenance required on its system, maintain its well facilities daily, confirm required disinfection levels on its system daily, collect daily Bac T samples as required and perform all other tasks required to provide its customers an adequate supply of safe potable water.

6) Southern's service personnel has been directed to minimize direct and/or physical contact with its customers. Additionally, all service personnel have been advised to only be away from home as necessary and to consult with Southern's field office staff immediately should they feel ill in any manner.


7) Although not addressed directly in Southern's Notice of modified operations, Southern will continue to issue monthly "Termination Notices" in compliance with PUC rules and regulations; however, Southern will not disconnect potable water service for non-payment of monthly billing statements until Southern's billing office reopens to the public.

Southern will continue to review these modified operations and the status of the virus for consideration of additional modifications in efforts to assure maximum protection of Southern's personnel, customers and the community from exposure to the virus.

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Project No. 50664  
Issues Related to the State of Disaster for the Corona Virus Disease 2019

I pray each of you, and family, are healthy and remain unaffected by this menacing virus. Should you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at 903.566.3511.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Michael R. Farrell", written in black ink.

Michael R. Farrell  
President

w/encl

MRF/mlr

cc: John Paul Urban, PUC Executive Director  
Connie Corona, PUC Chief Program Officer  
Kelley Fairbanks  
Scotty Pope  
Mary Ragsdale  
Geoff Kirschbaum



**!!!! PLEASE READ BELOW !!!!**

## **NOTICE TO ALL CUSTOMERS**

With the confirmation of Coronavirus cases in Smith, Cherokee and Rusk Counties from the Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health), Southern Utilities Company (Southern) will immediately implement modified operations to protect the wellness of our staff and community. **THESE MODIFIED OPERATIONS WILL BE IN PLACE FROM MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2020 UNTIL WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2020.**

In an abundance of caution, Southern's billing office will be closed to public walk-ins, with the sole exception of those individuals placing application for **NEW WATER SERVICE ONLY FROM 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM MONDAY through FRIDAY.**

If you have further questions regarding water service, please contact Southern's billing office at 903.593.2588.

All payments of monthly billing statements **MUST** be made by US Mail or via automobile only at **SOUTHERN'S DRIVE-THRU FROM 9:00 AM TO 4:00 PM MONDAY through FRIDAY.**

Southern's service department will be available for emergency services by **TELEPHONE ONLY** at 903.566.3511.

Southern will continually monitor the situation to determine if these modified operations will be extended beyond April 1, 2020.

Southern appreciates your understanding, patience and cooperation as we work through this unfortunate situation together.



# **NOTICE TO ALL CUSTOMERS**

With the confirmation of COVID-19 cases in Smith, Cherokee and Rusk Counties from the Northeast Texas Public Health District (NET Health), Southern Utilities Company (Southern) will immediately implement the following to protect the wellness of our staff, customers and community.

***BEGINNING TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2020, SOUTHERN'S BILLING OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC. THESE MODIFIED OPERATIONS WILL BE IN PLACE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.***

If you have any questions regarding water service, please contact Southern's billing office at 903.593.2588.

All payments **MUST** be made by US Mail or from automobile only at **SOUTHERN'S DRIVE-THRU FROM 9:00 AM TO 4:00 PM MONDAY through FRIDAY.**

Southern's service department will be **CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC.** Please call 903.566.3511 for all emergency situations.

Southern will continually monitor the situation to determine if these modified operations are no longer necessary.

Southern greatly appreciates your understanding, patience and cooperation as we work through this unfortunate situation together.

# SOUTHERN UTILITIES C O M P A N Y

218 North Broadway Ave.  
Tyler, Texas 75702-5710  
Phone: 903.593.2588

March 23, 2020

TO: All Customers  
FROM: Michael R. Farrell  
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Pandemic  
Modified Operations

With the confirmation of COVID-19 cases in Smith, Cherokee and Rusk Counties, and Statewide, all of us are subject to contracting the virus. Southern Utilities Company (Southern) is very concerned about the health and welfare of its staff, customers and the community in general.

Consequently, Southern's management has decided to implement strict operational modifications to protect these individuals and the community. This decision has not been made in haste, but rather after thoughtful consideration and based on the information provided by the Northeast Texas Public Health District, the State of Texas and the Federal Government. Further, this decision is not different than the modified operations instituted by other Public Utility Companies statewide.

Please read the attached "**NOTICE TO ALL CUSTOMERS**" to fully understand Southern's modified operations as of March 24, 2020, the absence of access to Southern's billing office lobby and Southern's hours of operation.

**NOTE:** Southern's modified hours of operation only provide access to Southern's drive-thru lanes and Southern's billing office personnel by telephone only.

Be assured, Southern will continually monitor the progression of COVID-19 within the East Texas area.

Southern appreciates your understanding in these challenging times for all.



Michael R. Farrell  
President

Office Fax  
903.593.1997

Field Office  
903.566.3511

Field Fax  
903.566.4740



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