Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Customer of Summit Natural Gas of Maine, Inc.



1-800-909-7642 www.SummitNaturalGasMaine.com

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## **WELCOME!**

Summit Natural Gas is happy to welcome you as a new customer. We look forward to delivering reliable natural gas to your home or business. This brochure provides a summary of customer rights and responsibilities as required under Chapter 815 of the Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC). The Maine PUC has authorized the procedures described here to ensure that all customers are treated fairly and are aware of their rights and responsibilities.

All of our rates are approved by the MPUC and are available to you upon request. You can access our PUC approved rate schedules on the Commission's website at www.maine.gov/mpuc. Our rate schedules and Terms and Conditions are also available on our website at www.SummitNaturalGasMaine.com/rates-tariff.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact our Customer Service Department at 800-909-7642, between 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Our representatives will be more than happy to assist you.

# YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A CUSTOMER OF SUMMIT NATURAL GAS

#### You are responsible for:

- Paying your bill by the due date.
- Letting us know if you cannot pay all of your natural gas bill before we disconnect your service.
- Maintaining your customer-owned piping from the meter to your natural gas appliances or equipment.

#### You have the right to:

- Seek help paying your natural gas bill. The community agencies you contact will decide whether you are eligible for aid. You may call our Customer Service Department toll-free at 800-909-7642 for information.
- Ask for a payment arrangement. If you are temporarily
  unable to pay your natural gas bill, you may request
  a payment arrangement for any undisputed past due
  amount. If you agree to a payment arrangement, you are
  acknowledging that the amount owed is accurate and
  you are responsible for payment of the amount. If you do
  not fulfill the terms of the payment arrangement, we may
  disconnect service. We are not required to offer a second
  payment arrangement before service is disconnected or
  the past due amounts is paid in full.
- Question whether your monthly bill is correct and have your bill adjusted if warranted. If you feel there is an error in your monthly bill or disconnection notice, please call our Customer Service Department at 800-909-7642. You must take timely action to protect your rights.

- File a complaint with us by calling 800-909-7642. We will do our best to investigate your complaint and try to resolve it.
- File a complaint with the Maine Public Utilities
  Commission's Consumer Assistance Division (CAD).
  To file a complaint with the CAD, you must first contact
  Summit Natural Gas and attempt to resolve your
  complaint prior to contacting them. If you've contacted
  us and are unable to resolve your complaint, you can
  file a complaint with the CAD and a Commission staff
  person will investigate your complaint and will notify
  you in writing or by telephone of the CAD's decision,
  the rationale behind the decision, and your options for
  further action.

While your billing complaint is being addressed by the CAD, you must pay (or enter into a payment arrangement to pay) the undisputed portions of your utility bills. Do this before the due date if you are disputing a bill or before the expiration date if you are disputing a disconnection notice. We will not disconnect service for nonpayment of the disputed portion of a bill while it is being reviewed. You have the right to suspend payment of the disputed portion of a bill while the dispute procedures described above are in progress.

Non-Residential customers who have filed a complaint with the CAD involving a disputed payment arrangement must pay montly charges that accrue after the complaint until the complaint is resolved, including the outcome of any appeal before the Commission.

You can reach the CAD by calling 1-800-452-4699; in person or in writing to the Maine Public Utilities Commission, Consumer Assistance Division, 18 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0018; or online at www.maine.gov/mpuc/consumer/file\_complaint.shtml.

## **DEPOSITS**

We may require a deposit before we start your gas service to guarantee payment for services. We can ask for a deposit only if there is evidence that you will be a credit risk or that you may not pay your future bills. In most cases, evidence of a credit risk is shown if you have an unpaid utility bill when you apply for service or you have been disconnected for nonpayment, unauthorized use or theft of services.

- You have the right to show us evidence that you can and will pay your future bills and avoid a deposit request.
   Non-Residential customers may provide prior credit history with another utility.
- If we require a deposit, we will inform you in writing within three (3) days and tell you what you can do to begin or continue service.

- Your deposit will earn interest monthly, at a rate determined annually by the MPUC. The interest on your deposit will be paid to you monthly as a credit to your gas bill.
- We will give you a choice between a cash deposit and allowing another person to "guarantee" your bills up to the deposit amount. The guarantor must be a customer in good standing with us.
- Residential customers: Your deposit plus interest will be credited to your account after twelve months if you have paid all bills by the due date for the past twelve months.
- Small Non-Residential customers: If you pay all bills or make all payments pursuant to an established payment arrangement by the due date for 5 consecutive years and do not have a remaining account balance at the end of the 5-year period, we will refund your deposit, including accrued interest, within 30 days after the final bill of the 5-year period is paid.
- We may retain deposits collected from Non-Residential Customers for as long as you remain a customer.
- When you close your account, your deposit and accrued interest will be applied to any amount due on your account, and any balance will be refunded to you promptly.

We can require a deposit that is equal to your anticipated bills for two highest billing periods. Residential customers will have a choice to pay the deposit in full or in three installments, with half the total due immediately, 25% in thirty (30) days and 25% in sixty (60) days. However, we may demand a full payment of a deposit if you are already using a payment arrangement to pay off an unpaid bill. Non Residential customers have the option of paying in full or in at least two equal installments in the form of cash, irrevocable bank letter of credit, surety bond, acceptable third-party guarantee or other security instrument.

# METER READING AND ESTIMATED USAGE

We read meters electronically every month to measure your gas usage.

#### **Estimated Usage**

We may need to estimate bills when the meter is inaccessible, during extreme weather conditions, emergencies, or other similar circumstances which may also prevent our employees from reading your meter. If a meter reading is not obtained, your usage will be estimated. When usage is estimated, we clearly state that fact on your bill with the word "Estimated", and any over- or under-billing is adjusted when the next actual reading is obtained and used for billing.

#### Reading your gas meter



You can check the accuracy of your bill and monitor your own gas usage by reading the meter yourself. The dial on your gas meter registers the amount of gas used in units of 100 cubic feet. Check your bill and see when the meter was read last month, then read it yourself on the same day this month. Wait until you receive the next bill, and then compare your readings with ours. They should be roughly the same. If they're not, please call us and we will send a Summit Natural Gas representative to read your meter.

#### **BILLING AND PAYMENTS**

You will receive your bill every month via mail or email a few days after your meter is read. Note: Please contact us if you do not receive a bill for 30 days. Failure to get a bill doesn't extend the time payment is due or avoid a Disconnection Notice if the amount is overdue. We've designed our bills to make it easy for you to know how much natural gas you've used, how your bill is calculated, how much you owe, and when your payment is due.

The amount shown on your bill as Total Amount Due should be paid and received by Summit in time to post on your account by the due date. You are permitted thirty (30) days to pay your bill from the mail date. The due date of your bill is clearly identified by the words "Due Date." A late payment fee will be applied to any amount due that is not paid on or before the due date listed on the bill. This fee is a percentage, set annually by the Maine PUC, to be applied to the past-due balance. If you mail your payment to us, your bill is considered paid on the day we receive it.

Your monthly bill will include any balance due, payments, credits, late fees, and three categories of natural gas service charges:

- Delivery and Service charges The cost to deliver and maintain safe reliable natural gas service to your home or business and other customer charges.
- 2) Supply charges The actual cost of the natural gas purchased to serve your home or business.
- 3) Taxes and other charges Depending on where you live, we may also collect required state and city fees and taxes, and any charges specific to your account.

For more information about your bill, visit https://summitnaturalgasmaine.com/HowToReadMyBill

## **PAYMENT OPTIONS**

Pay by Phone: Call 855-382-5431 to make a one-time payment using your checking/savings account or debit/credit card. Transactions may take up to five business days to be processed.

Pay by Mail: Send your payment, along with the payment stub to: Summit Natural Gas of Maine, P.O. Box 9257, Des Moines, IA 50306-9257.

Pay in Person: Summit Natural Gas of Maine and CheckFreePay have partnered with several retail locations in your area to offer another convenient, reliable method of paying your natural gas bill. Visit www.SummitNaturalGasMaine.com/payment-options and click "Find Locations" to find the nearest participating retailer.

Pay Automatically: Pay your bill automatically every month directly from your checking, savings, debit or credit card account. Visit www.SummitNaturalGasMaine.com then click the Pay My Bill link, then follow the steps below to enroll in AutoPay, or call us at 800-909-7642.

**Pay Online:** Visit www.SummitNaturalGasMaine.com then click the Pay My Bill link at the top of the page. This brings you to the Account Login page.

**Step 1:** Register your account - You will need an email account and your account number listed on your gas bill to sign up. Once you have completed the account registration form, press submit to create your account.

**Step 2:** Log in to your account - Using your email address or account number and the password you created, you can log in to your account any time that's convenient for you. When you log on, you will see the My Account page.

## With an online account you can:

- · View Your Bill to see your current bill and charges due
- See your Payment History and Usage History
- Pay Your Bill electronically with your checking or savings account, or debit or credit card
- Enroll in billing options such as Budget Billing, eBill email notifications and AutoPay

#### SPECIAL BILLING OPTIONS

#### eBill

Save paper and make your record-keeping easier when you register to receive eBill email notifications when your bill is available online. Enroll online at www.SummitNaturalGasMaine.com

#### **Budget Billing**

Even out your monthly payments and enjoy lower bills in the winter. Budget Billing is based on the previous 12-months' average. Your initial Budget Bill amount will be determined by computing an annual estimate using the actual bill amounts for your account's most recent 12-month period and dividing the result into 11 equal monthly payments. The monthly payment amount will be rounded to the next whole dollar. The billing for the 12th month of the Budget Billing Plan year will reflect the actual usage for that month adjusted for any over-collection or under-collection for the previous 11 months of the Budget Billing Plan year. If a credit balance remains after all amounts due to Summit Natural Gas are applied, you will be given the option to have it credited against future bills or refunded within twenty-five days. If the total of the actual usage for the 12th month plus any under-collection for the previous 11 months exceeds your current Budget Bill Amount, you will have the option of paying the total due or entering into a deferred payment arrangement for up to three months for the amount above the current Budget Bill Amount. Actual consumption and pricing will be compared periodically to projected consumption during the Budget Billing Plan year. A Budget Bill amount may be adjusted to minimize the chance of a large difference at the end of the Budget Billing Plan year.

#### **Payment Arrangements**

If you cannot pay your account in full, please call our Customer Service Department at 1-800-909-7642 to set up a payment arrangement. We will continue service if you pay a reasonable portion of your bill and you agree to pay the rest in affordable weekly or monthly payments. You must also agree to pay all future bills within thirty (30) days of the postmark until the overdue amount is paid in full. We will consider the following issues when establishing a payment arrangement:

- · Your ability to pay
- The size of the overdue amount
- · Your previous payment history
- The amount of time the bill has remained unpaid and the reason why the overdue amount is outstanding
- Any special circumstances creating extreme hardships within the household or whether disconnection would pose a danger to your household
- Any unique circumstances affecting Non-Residential customers

We will send you a written copy of a payment arrangement that requires two or more payments within three (3) business days after a payment arrangement is established. If you do not make payments according to the written payment arrangement, we can send you a disconnection notice that gives you three (3) business days to pay the full overdue amount. We are not required to make a second arrangement, but we will try to take into consideration your unique circumstances. If we cannot agree on the terms of a payment arrangement, you may contact the CAD for assistance.

#### **Third-Party Notification and Notices**

To help prevent unnecessary interruption of gas service, please let us know if you want another person to get a copy of any disconnection notice we send you. We will send a copy to the person you designate, but you are still responsible for payment. Available to all residential customers, this service is especially advantageous to senior citizens and individuals with disabilities, providing peace of mind to children, relatives, and friends.

## INTERRUPTION OF SERVICE

We may need to temporarily interrupt your service when it is necessary to repair or maintain our delivery system; to eliminate an imminent threat to life, health, safety or substantial property damage; or for reasons of local, state or national emergency.

When possible, we will let you know why and how long you can expect to be without service. If we plan to interrupt service to more than ten customers or a single Non-Residential customer or for more than five hours, we must give you a minimum of 24-hours' notice. We will give you more notice whenever possible. If your service must be interrupted without notice for more than five hours due to storms or other emergencies, we will try to let you know as soon as possible how long you are likely to be without service. Notifications of the cause and expected duration of the interruption may be given through general notification means such as posting outage information on our website and making outage information available to customers that call our Customer Service Department.

Please notify us right away of the presence of special needs that depend on utility service, and we will put you on a priority list to restore services as soon as possible.

#### Liability and Abatement for Interrupted Service

Whoever is responsible for injury to persons or damage to property due to a willful act or negligence arising from the use of gas will also be responsible for paying all direct costs resulting from such action. We are not responsible for any internal piping or equipment that we do not own or did not install. If we must pay any person for claims of injury, damage or loss because of such internal piping or equipment, we expect you to reimburse us for such costs unless the law prohibits such reimbursements. Neither we, nor you, will be held responsible for such injuries or damage if the action was beyond control (i.e. "Acts of God"). Notify us right away for any claim for loss you believe is our responsibility.

#### DISCONNECTION OF SERVICE

The Maine PUC has authorized Summit Natural Gas to discontinue or refuse to supply natural gas service under certain circumstances:

#### Disconnection WITHOUT notice may happen if:

- We need to correct a situation that poses a health or safety hazard to you or others
- · To make repairs, maintain or test our equipment
- To prevent damage to our equipment or to prevent a violation of federal, state or local laws for use of service
- There is evidence of tampering with Summit's equipment or to prevent the unauthorized use of service or tampering with pipe, meters and other equipment
- Failure to honor the terms of a Delayed Payment Agreement
- · At your request, or abandonment of the property

#### Disconnection WITH notice may happen if:

- A customer violates or fails to comply with Summit's rules and regulations of gas supply.
- A customer fails to fulfill contractual obligations for service and/or facilities subject to MPUC regulations
- A customer fails to provide reasonable access to Summit's equipment
- · A customer has not paid a delinquent account or
- A customer fails to pay a deposit

#### We Are Not Allowed to Disconnect for:

- Non-basic service charges, such as for merchandise or service not regulated by the MPUC.
- An old bill that was not properly transferred to your account when you applied for service.
- Estimated usage. However, we can disconnect for this if you have refused to allow us to read a meter or you have refused to provide an actual reading on our form.
- We will not disconnect if you or a doctor notify us of a medical emergency (see below).
- If you are a tenant and if your landlord asks us to disconnect or if your landlord does not pay the bill, we will issue you a notice and opportunity to put service in your own name. You do not have to pay the landlord's unpaid bill.

#### **Disconnection Notices**

In most cases, we will notify you in writing at least 14 days for residential customers or 7 days for Non-Residential customers, before a stated disconnection date. However, we may give you as few as three (3) business days' notice if you've broken a payment arrangement, failed to pay a deposit or provide a guarantor, paid with a bad check, or received service without applying to become a customer. We can disconnect without notice as outlined above only if there is unauthorized use (meter tampering) or a dangerous condition. A notice is good for ten (10) business days after the disconnection date stated on it. The ten (10) days may be extended if you refuse to give us access to the meter or other equipment to turn off service.

The disconnection notice will tell you what to do to avoid disconnection and how you can dispute your bill or the disconnection itself. We will not disconnect service on a Friday,

a weekend, a legal holiday, the day before a holiday or on any day our office is not open for business.

#### FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Low income residential customers may qualify for help to pay a utility bill. The best source of information is to call your local Community Action Agency or local Department of Human Services office and ask about the Emergency Assistance Program. In addition, we partner with local organizations that can lend a helping hand if you are having trouble paying your energy bills, including:

Maine LIHEAP - The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) provides money to help low-income homeowners and renters pay for heating costs. Contact our Customer Service Department at 800-909-7642 or visit www. SummitNaturalGasMaine.com/PaymentAssistance for more information.

Maine 211 - If you're struggling to keep up with your energy and utility bills, a Maine-based specialist will connect you with programs in your area that can help you. Dial 211 or text your zip code to 898-211 to connect with a Maine-based Specialist today.

Low Income Weatherization Program – Maine Housing's Weatherization Program provides grants to low-income homeowners and renters to reduce energy costs by improving home energy efficiency. Central Heating Improvement Program (CHIP) grants may be used to repair or replace central heating systems. Contact Maine Housing at 207-626-4600 for eligibility requirements and program details.

#### MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Summit Natural Gas will not disconnect service or refuse to reconnect for residential customers when you or someone in your house is seriously ill, if a registered physician confirms that an emergency exists. If you cannot get a doctor to call right away, you may let us know yourself. We will wait three (3) workdays for the doctor to call or write us. We can require written certification from the doctor, including specific reasons why service is necessary and how long the emergency will last. Disconnection can be postponed due to a medical emergency for up to 30 days and can be renewed up to 90 days. Please call our Customer Service Department at 1-800-909-7642 for more information.

Please note: a medical emergency does not cancel the bill. We will refer you to financial assistance agencies and ask you to negotiate a reasonable payment arrangement.

## STOPPING SERVICE

If you would like to stop your gas service, call us at 800-909-7642, or visit our website and click Contact Us and complete the online form to tell us you want to stop your gas service. Please give us at least seven (7) days' notice before you want your gas turned off. If you write a letter, we'll consider the notice to be given three (3) days after the letter is mailed. Please note that until you give us notice you're responsible for gas service to that location. We will bill you for service until you give the required notice, or we disconnect, whichever is first.

#### **RECONNECTING SERVICE**

Once you have paid your overdue bill or have agreed to a payment arrangement, we must reconnect service again promptly. We may also charge you a deposit equal to two billing periods if you are disconnected for nonpayment or unauthorized use or theft of service. Non-Residential customers may be required to pay the amount overdue and a deposit before the reconnection of service. There is no additional Reconnection Charge.

#### **SAFETY**

Safety is and will always be our number one priority when it comes to our customers and our employees. More information is available on our website at www.SummitNaturalGasMaine. com/safety.

Summit Natural Gas of Maine works with local police, fire and emergency response teams to ensure the continued safety of your community. This includes conducting training and seminars, meeting with local officials, and reviewing emergency response plans.

#### Reporting an Outage or Emergency

Call us at 1-800-883-3181 if you have a natural gas outage or emergency, or call 911 if you detect a gas leak.

#### Smell Gas? Act Fast!

Customers like you are the first line of defense when it comes to leak detection. Clean-burning natural gas is colorless and odorless, so we add an odorant called mercaptan which smells similar to rotten eggs or sulfur to make it easy to smell if there is a gas leak. Your safety is important, so If you smell gas:

- Leave the area immediately and take others with you.
- Do not use any electronics, flip any light switches, open windows or anything else that could cause a spark – just leave immediately.
- Once you are away from the area, call 911 or Summit Natural Gas at 1-800-883-3181 and say that you smell a natural gas leak. We'll send someone to check things out.

- Always call to report a leak, don't assume someone else will do it.
- Provide the location of the leak, including cross streets, and let us know if any digging, construction or excavation is going on in the area.
- Follow directions from utility employees or emergency responders on-site who will let you know when it is safe to return.

## Other ways to recognize hazards on a pipeline:

- · Roaring sound like an engine
- · A hissing or whistling noise
- · Fire coming from the ground or burning above ground
- Dirt or water blowing from a hole in the ground
- An area of frozen ground in the summer
- Patches of dead vegetation or grass in a moist field

#### Call 811 Before You Dig

Since pipelines and other utilities are underground and can't be seen, the leading cause of damage is digging by homeowners and construction crews. That's why you should always call 811 three days before you dig to have your underground utilities marked. Our gas lines will be marked with yellow flags and/or spray paint. That way, you know what areas to be careful digging, so everyone stays safe.



Always call DigSafe - It's free, it's for your safety, and it's the law.

#### **Customer-Owned Piping Responsibility**

Summit Natural Gas owns and maintains the natural gas piping from the street to your meter. Natural gas customers are responsible for maintaining any natural gas lines from the meter to your natural gas appliances. These lines may be above or below ground. For safety's sake, have your gas lines inspected periodically by a plumbing or heating contractor who can inspect, repair and maintain your gas lines from the meter to your appliances.

#### **Hot Water Scalding Safety**

Many consumers do not know excessively hot tap water can cause severe burns, and most injuries and deaths involving tap water scalds are to the elderly and children under the age of five. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) urges all users to lower their water heaters to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. In addition to preventing accidents, this decrease in temperature will conserve energy and save money. \*

Most scalding injuries can be prevented by making sure your water heater is set to a safe temperature, always feeling the water temperature before placing a child in the bathtub, and never leaving a child alone or with other young children in the bathtub.

\*Source: https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/5098.pdf

#### **Appliance Connector Safety**

Damaged and improperly maintained interior piping and connectors may present hidden dangers to customers, so your gas connectors need to be inspected regularly and replaced as needed. Certain kinds of flexible connectors manufactured between 1970 and 1980 may fail over time and need to be replaced.

- Only a qualified heating or plumbing professional should check your connector and replace it if needed. Do not try to do this yourself.
- If you need to disconnect or move a gas appliance, gas connectors should always be removed by a professional, and the fuel line should be plugged and capped.
- Gas pipes should be properly maintained and never used for unintended uses such as hanging clothes.

## Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing (CSST) Safety

Corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) is a flexible, stainless steel piping system used to supply natural gas and propane in residential, Non-Residential, and industrial structures. Standard CSST is coated with a yellow exterior plastic coating. It has been safely used in homes and businesses since 1990 and is an effective means of delivering natural gas and propane gas to homes and businesses. CSST has typically 75% fewer fittings than traditional pipe which means a safer system, less leak potential and reduced callbacks.

Like all gas piping systems, CSST must be properly installed by a qualified professional and in accordance with the Manufacturer's Design and Installation (D&I) Guide, which now expressly includes bonding and grounding of the system in new installations. A bonding connection installed on a gas piping system, as with any metallic system within a house, will reduce the likelihood of electrical arcing to or from other bonded metallic systems in the structure.

However, some previously installed CSST systems prior to 2006 may not have the proper bonding for optimal safety: If lightning strikes on or near a structure, there is risk it can travel through the structure's gas piping system and cause a leak, and in some cases a fire. If you have yellow CSST that was installed prior to 2006, it's possible that it does not meet current installation requirements, and it is strongly recommended that you contact a licensed electrician to make sure that your system is properly bonded.

For more information, please visit http://CSSTsafety.com

Note: CSST should not be confused with flexible gas appliance connectors – the product that joins a moveable appliance to your home or building's gas supply line. The difference is flexible connectors attach directly to the moveable appliance from the wall or floor. CSST is usually routed beneath, through and alongside floor joists in your basement, inside interior wall cavities and on top of ceiling joists in attic spaces.

#### Flammable Ignition Awareness

Never use gasoline or other flammable liquids indoors or in the same room or area as a natural gas appliance or other ignition source, as it could start a fire or cause an explosion.

- Gasoline and other flammable liquids should never be used indoors, and should be stored in an approved container, away from children.
- Gasoline is a motor fuel. Never use it as a cleaner.
- Keep gasoline ONLY in an approved gasoline container. Make sure the container is tightly sealed. Never store gasoline in plastic milk jugs or glass containers.
- Never fill gasoline containers to the top. Allow room for vapor expansion.
- Store gasoline in a safe container on a high shelf, in a cool place, away from the house.
- Talk to your children about the dangers of flammable liquid products.



Summit Natural Gas of Maine, Inc. PO Box 2414, 115 N 12th Street Fort Smith, AR 72902-2414

#### **CONTACT US**

Customer Service: 1-800-909-7642

**Website:** www.SummitNaturalGasMaine.com **Email:** customerservice@summitnaturalgas.com

Pay by Phone: 855-382-5431

On Facebook: www.facebook.com/

SummitNaturalGasMaine

Report an Emergency: 911 or 1-800-883-3181 Line locates/Call Before You Dig: 811 (DigSafe)

Mail bill payments to:

Summit Natural Gas of Maine, Inc. P.O. Box 77207 Minneapolis, MN 55480-7200

## **Billing Schedule**

Monthly

#### Late Payment Fee

Late Payment Fee is adjusted and approved annually by the MPUC.

#### **Current Rates and Service Charges**

Available online at https://summitnaturalgasmaine.com/rates-tariff and on file with the Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) at www.maine.gov/mpuc

MPUC Mailing address: 18 State House Station,

Augusta, ME 04333-0018 MPUC Physical address: 101 Second Street,

Hallowell, ME 04347

MPUC Phone: 207-287-3831