

2 Referral process – social service agencies to provide updated contact and process information

- The contact person for Alberta Works has changed and it was requested that the regional offices be contacted first whenever possible. Representatives from Alberta Works will distribute to the group a list of contact information for its six regional offices.
- Alberta Works confirmed that its website links are current and that the contact center is the central number to call (1-866-644-5135). However, in Edmonton the 1-866 needs to be replaced with 780.
- Retailers were asked to check if the Alberta Works contact number is correct on their websites.

ACTION: Alberta Works to provide the group contact information for its six regional offices.

ACTION: Retailers to check if the contact number for Alberta Works is correct on their websites.

- The contact information for AISH is current and the group agreed that the process was working well. The representative from AISH mentioned that calling the Alberta Supports Contact Centre is the most effective first point of contact and it will re-direct parties to the appropriate program depending on the situation.

3 Distributor site visit process

- The question of whether retailers attempt to contact customers who have been disconnected before sending their information to the distributor was posed to the group. A number of the retailers present stated that they make three attempts to contact the customer before passing on customer information to the distributor.
- AUC staff asked the group about the timelines used last year.
 - On October 11, retailers extracted the list of customers still disconnected after payment has been received; then from October 11 to the end of October retailers attempted to contact customers on the list; November 1, an updated list was pulled and sent to the distributor. The November 1 list is what the distributor uses to conduct its site visits.
 - Both retailers and distributors confirmed that this timeline is good to use this year as well.
- The UCA was asked when it needs the list from the distributors.
 - It was decided that neither the retailer or the distributor is to send this list, containing customer information for those who have not been reconnected, to the UCA as the UCA can only accept information contained in the template excel document, as this document has been approved by the Alberta privacy commissioner. The burden of altering the information in the excel list to make it acceptable was not seen as necessary since the numbers of customers on this list was so small.
- One party questioned what the standard process was for situations where a customer refuses to be reconnected, they are not receiving services from elsewhere and the distributor identifies that there are vulnerable customers in the house, such as children, who is responsible for contacting social services?
 - Each distributor present seemed to have different policies for this type of situation, and were asked to verify and confirm its company's policies to ensure there are documented steps to be taken if vulnerable customers are located at a

site, such as passing that information on to the appropriate authorities or to the UCA.

ACTION: Each distributor to check its policies for processes used when a vulnerable customer is located at the site, but the customer refuses to be reconnected.

4 UCA process – group to discuss timelines and other changes to process for 2013/2014

- UCA representatives were asked when they need the lists from retailers of customers in arrears.
 - Last year the process timeline was October 11, retailers ran the list; October 17 to the end of October the retailer attempted to contact the customer by letter and/or phone; November 1, an updated list was pulled and information for those customers in arrears was sent to the UCA using the excel template document, those customers who were not in arrears got passed on to the distributor.
 - The UCA would like to use the same timeline this year, receiving the list only from the retailer.

ACTION: UCA to distribute to the group the excel template to use for providing customer information for those customers who have not been reconnected, to the UCA.

- Assuming it receives the list from retailers early enough on or before November 1, the UCA will send a letter to customers in arrears on November 1 and will begin making phone calls on November 12.
- The group discussed circumstances where gas customers have been disconnected for six months, and now a municipal permit is required for reconnection.
 - The UCA would like to get these customers in touch with support services before they reach the six month barrier. The UCA has information on this on its website however, it was suggested that, for gas customers, the October 17 letter from retailers should contain this information as well. It was agreed that the wording found on the UCA's website can be used in the letter.
 - Direct Energy asked the UCA to send the wording and it would check into the possibility of including this information in the October 17 letter.

ACTION: UCA to send language from its website, to Direct Energy, pertaining to the requirement for municipality permits after gas customers have been disconnected for six months.

ACTION: Direct Energy to look into including the language pertaining to the requirement for municipality permits after gas customers have been disconnected for six months in its October 17 letters to customers disconnected due to non-payment.

- The UCA has noticed that there is inconsistency in retailer practice regarding payment options for vulnerable customers. There was discussion around, for electricity, whether retailers could accept partial payment and reconnect the customer but install a limiter on the site. Retailers do not have the ability to determine if a limiter can be installed at the site, it has to be done by distributors.
 - The retailers present discussed that they would prefer to work with these customers on a case-by-case basis to set up payment plans and not create a standardized, documented process.