



Florida Public Service Commission

Consumer Bulletin

Lila A. Jaber, Chairman



Understanding Current Diversion and Its Risks

Electricity can be dangerous if it is not used for ordinary consumption in residential, commercial, and industrial settings. Unfortunately, each year a number of individuals take a great risk to avoid paying for the electricity they consume. The theft of electric service is an issue that concerns the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) because this deceptive practice places an unfair burden on the consumers who pay their fair share of electric costs. The technical term for the theft of electric service is "current diversion."

Current diversion may take place in a number of ways, but the important point to remember is that all of these deceptive approaches are not only illegal but also extremely dangerous. A person that attempts to bypass any meter, that tampers with any meter or metering equipment, that alters the rotation of any meter disc, or is found using an unauthorized meter is engaging in a crime that can ultimately lead to arrest, conviction, or even more serious consequences. Some individuals have also attempted to steal electricity from electric utility facilities (including electric substations) and their actions have led to serious injuries, electrocutions, fires, explosions, and even deaths.

Individuals that engage in current diversion are often investigated by their electric utilities and asked to reimburse the full dollar value of the

suspected stolen amount of electricity. Moreover, individuals who have been found guilty of this crime are likely to experience increased monitoring and scrutiny because of the possibility that there will be further attempts to defraud the utility at a later date.

Ultimately, all consumers are urged to obtain information on how to conserve energy, which is clearly the safest way to save money on your electric bill. If you have any questions about current diversion or are interested in learning how to conserve energy safely and efficiently, you may contact the PSC's Division of Consumer Affairs toll-free at **1-800-342-3552**, or by e-mail at contact@psc.state.fl.us. The PSC's Web site is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at www.floridapsc.com and offers information on a range of energy topics. Please feel free to visit this Web site to review our many brochures and reports about electric safety and conservation education.

Lila A. Jaber is the Chairman of the Florida Public Service Commission. The PSC sets the rates regulated utility companies charge for natural gas, electric and telephone service within the state. In 36 counties, it sets the price you pay for the water you drink, if your water company is privately owned. Chairman Jaber is also a member of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service and the state chair of the Federal-State Joint Conference on Advanced Telecommunications Services.