

P A T H

Department of Prevention, Assistance, Transition, and Health Access

FROM Eileen I. Elliott, Commissioner
for the Secretary

BULLETIN NO. 01-20F

DATE 10/16/2001

SUBJECT Fuel Program Changes

CHANGES ADOPTED EFFECTIVE 11/1/2001

INSTRUCTIONS

- Maintain Manual - See instructions below.
- Proposed Regulation - Retain bulletin and attachments until you receive Manual Maintenance Bulletin
- Information or Instructions - Retain until

MANUAL REFERENCE(S)

2900	2911
2906	2913
2907	2958

This bulletin changes the regulations for the seasonal fuel assistance component and the crisis fuel assistance component policies of the Fuel Program:

Higher dollar amounts in the Standard Heating Cost Tables for households that heat with natural gas. Summer fuel purchase agreements to increase the purchasing power of Fuel Program benefits. September benefit payment for eligible households that heat with firewood. Clarification of recoupment language in the seasonal component. Additional policy citation for the crisis component. Benefit recoupment for the crisis component.

Detailed Summary of Changes

The changes to the Fuel Program policy are as follows:

WAM 2900 Fuel Program

The policy changes a citation for the crisis component rules.

WAM 2906.4 Standard Heating cost Tables

The policy allows a higher dollar amounts in the Standard Heating Cost Tables for households that heat with natural gas. The Standard Heating Cost Tables were implemented in policy in September, 1999. Policy requires that the tables be revised no less frequently than every three years. The revisions respond to a rate increase for natural gas.

WAM 2907 Benefit Issuance

The policy allows for a September wood fuel benefit payment for eligible households that heat with firewood and apply between July 15 and August 31.

The rule relating to a September wood fuel benefit payment is a recapitulation of current rules on the same subject that were adopted, effective June 19, 2001, under an expedited process authorized by Act 63 (2001 Budget Act). This subsequent filing is necessary because Act 63 specified that the rule adopted by the expedited process could be effective for only the 2001-2002 heating season.

WAM 2913 Advantageous Pricing

The policy implements summer fuel purchase agreements to increase the purchasing power of Fuel Program benefits. Language identifies that agreements may be for any home heating fuel type and makes agreements subject to Fuel Supplier Certification. Policy identifies that agreement financial amounts will be based on the past number of recipients served by a supplier and a projected average annual fuel benefit.

Language requires the Fuel Office to inform program recipients and suppliers which fuel benefits are subject to a summer fuel purchase agreement and how those fuel benefits are obtained. Language clarifies that program recipients are responsible for paying for fuel not covered by seasonal fuel benefits.

Policy allows fuel suppliers to choose not to enter into a summer fuel purchase agreement and still participate in the Fuel Program subject to Fuel Supplier Certification.

Language requires the Fuel Office to make available a list of suppliers who have entered into summer fuel purchase agreements and to advise recipients of the key terms of any summer fuel purchase agreement entered into by their certified fuel supplier.

The rule relating to Advantageous Pricing is a recapitulation of current rules on the same subject that were adopted, effective June 19, 2001, under an expedited process authorized by Act 63 (2001 Budget Act). This subsequent filing is necessary because Act 63 specified that the rule adopted by the expedited process could be effective for only the 2001-2002 heating season.

WAM 2911 Recoupment

The policy clarifies that recoupment might be accomplished through the seasonal or the crisis components of the Fuel Program and eliminates a redundant clause.

WAM 2958 Recoupment

This policy provides for benefit recoupment in the crisis fuel assistance component when an overpayment results due to error or fraud.

No comments on the proposed rule were given at an oral hearing held on Tuesday, September 4, 2001, at 9:00 a.m., in the Skylight Conference Room, Agency of Human Services, State Office Complex, Waterbury, Vermont.

No written comments on the proposed rule were received by the 4:00 p.m. deadline on Tuesday, September 11, 2001.

The Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules considered this bulletin on October 3, 2001. No changes resulted from the Committee's consideration.

Significant changes to policy including deletions are indicated by vertical lines in the left margin. Changes to clarify, rearrange, or correct references without changing the policy are dotted.

Manual Maintenance

Manual Holders: Please maintain manuals assigned to you as follows. You will need both the proposed and the final bulletin to maintain your manuals.

Fuel Policy

<u>Remove</u>		<u>Insert</u>	
TOC P.3 (2900)	(99-21F)	TOC P.3 (2900)	(01-20)
2900	(00-16F)	2900	(01-20)
2906.4 P.2	(00-16F)	2906.4 P.2	(01-20)
2907	(01-04)	2907	(01-20)
2911	(96-57)	2911	(01-20)
2913	(01-04)	2913	(01-20)
Nothing		2958	(01-20)