

# Customer Service Standards

Links to topics in this section:

<a href="#">Final Bill / Charge Off Timeline</a>	<a href="#">Potential Charge Off List</a>
<a href="#">Arrangements on Final Bills</a>	<a href="#">Final Bill Collection Process</a>
<a href="#">"Gulf Final Bills" Global e-mail</a>	<a href="#">Deferring Charge Offs</a>
<a href="#">Refund Checks</a>	<a href="#">Free Skip-Tracing Tools</a>
<a href="#">Customer Information</a>	<a href="#">Transfer Policy</a>
<a href="#">Active Customer with a Final Bill</a>	<a href="#">Mobius Reports</a>
<a href="#">Final Bills &lt; = \$2.00</a>	<a href="#">Probate Processes</a>
<a href="#">Deceased Process (Estates &amp; Trusts)</a>	<a href="#">Uncollectible Review</a>
<a href="#">Return Mail Process</a>	

## FINAL BILL / CHARGE OFF TIMELINE

<i>Event</i>	<i>Work Day</i>	<i>Explanation</i>
Final Date	0	Date Account Finals
Delivery Date	1	Final Bill is Mailed
Due Date	16	20 Calendar Days = 15 Work Days
Extended Due Date	17	1 Work Day After the Due Date
Place On Potential Charge Off List*	21	Placed in this Status 5 days after the Extended Due Date
Final Notice # 1	22	1st Final Notice is Generated in Batch (CSC Telephone Number)
Place on Potential Charge	22	Placed in this Status when the 1 <sup>st</sup> Final Notice is Sent

Off List B*		
Final Notice # 2	35	2 <sup>nd</sup> Final Notice is Generated in Batch (Final Bill Telephone Number 1-888-326-4853)
Place on Potential Charge Off List C*	35	Placed in this Status when the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Final Notice is Sent
Charge-Off	63	Unpaid Final Accounts Charge Off in Batch
Sent to Agency	100	Final Accounts Balance Due \$25> Sent To Collection Agency

\*Potential Charge Off List & Potential Charge Off List B and C are the same list. CSS identifies these differently according to the number of days final.

[Return to top](#)

### [Arrangements on Final Bills:](#)

- Go ahead and handle inquires or disputes about a final bill. It is not necessary to refer the customer to the Final Bill rep.
- Add a Billing Issues contact stating the amount and when the customer will pay.
- If the customer states they will pay after the Send to Collection Agency date, add the Billing Issues contact and send an email to Gulf Final Bills stating the details of payment.
  - The final bill CSR will defer the final bill to prevent the account from going to the Collection Agency.
- If a final bill has been transferred to the customer's active account, it is not necessary to refer them or to email the Final Bill rep. Add a Billing Issues contact on the active account to document the amount and when they will pay.
- If you transfer a final bill to the customer's active account, it is not necessary to contact the Final Bill rep. Be sure it is made clear to the customer this amount will be added to their next bill. Reference the "Transfer Policy" in 13.9 of Standards before transferring final bills. Otherwise, issue a Misc Customer Service WFM to transfer the final bill to the active account.

- When a customer calls concerning a final bill, be sure to add a good final mailing address and phone number in the "Maintain Bill Account" window. If Maintain Bill Account is not enabled, add the information to Other Customer Info.
- If a customer states they do not have a final mailing address, get their email address. Let them know this is for informational purposes only. They will not receive their final bill via email unless they enroll in paperless.
- Do not place a Collection Arrangement on a final bill account. Use the Billing Issue contact to document final bill payments.
- Do not place a Special Agreement on a final bill account. This sets the final bill account back to a status of Active and the Account Type to Final Service Active. Even though the account status is active no event will occur to cause the system to bill the installments for the Special Agreement.
- Gulf Coast Collection Bureau is the agency that works to collect Gulf Power accounts after they have charged off. Should a customer need to contact them directly: Phone: 1-866-991-7358; Mail: 5630 Marquesas Circle, Sarasota, FL 34233-3331.
- When a charge off is paid, it is not removed from their credit report. Their credit information will be updated to reflect the account has been paid, but any negative impact on their credit will not be removed.

[Return to top](#)

### ["Gulf Final Bills" Global E-Mail:](#)

There is a "Gulf Final Bills" global e-mail address set up for all final bill issues that need to be sent to our Final Bill Collection department. Do not issue a Customer Service WFM for final bill issues. The WFM will be worked by local office CSR's, not by the final bill group. Therefore, use the "Gulf Final Bills" e-mail address.

Notification to other OPCO's concerning Final Bills should be forwarded as follows:

- Alabama Power Company – send a Misc Customer Service WFM – Attn: Final Bills
- Georgia Power Company – email "GPC Final Bills"
- Mississippi Power Company – send a Misc Customer Service WFM – Attn: Final Bills

[Return to top](#)

### [Refund Checks:](#)

The Crestview Local Office will be working all final bill Refund Check WFM's. Customer Accounting performs a second review on checks \$1000 >. After refunds are researched, the check is either released to the customer or applied to an outstanding bill for the same customer and revenue class.

Reference [Section 2.8, Refund Checks](#) for additional information.

[Return to top](#)

### **Final Bills < = \$2.00**

### [Customer Information](#)

When a customer calls concerning a final bill or an active account, be sure to add a good final mailing address, phone number, employment phone, etc. to customer comments in "Maintain Customer Data". This will assist everyone involved in collecting unpaid final bills. Add comments of what information you updated. Always update customer information when using an old customer record to "drag and drop" for a connect.

[Return to top](#)

### [Active Customer Has a Final Bill](#)

If a customer calls after the final bill has already been transferred to the active account, the CSR receiving the call can make arrangements on the active account if necessary.

If a CSR discovers during a customer contact that a customer has a final bill and an active account, the CSR can transfer the final bill to the active account and make arrangements on the active service. Notify the customer that the final bill will appear on next months bill.

[Return to top](#)

### [Return Mail Process](#)

The Final Bill Department will work return mail for only their final bill collection letters.

The Local Offices and the Customer Service Center will work all other returned mail and returned final bills. If a certified letter is returned, please send that returned letter to the person who sent it.

## [Bills on active accounts:](#)

The Local Offices and the Customer Service Center will work all returned mail on active accounts.

If you notice 3 or 4 return mails month after month on an active account, research and send a copy of the current bill to a better address if found. Perhaps this will help on accounts that are building up a large balance.

If the Post Office has returned the mail to us with a yellow sticker indicating a new forwarding address, check the address to be sure it is in the customer's name. If so, put a critical "Returned Mail" account contact to expire in 3 months, with the reason for the return and state what the original address was. Change the special mailing address in CSS.

Type a new envelope to the address on the yellow sticker. Include the bill and the original envelope. CSS will not issue another bill to the new address until the next billing.

Occasionally the Post Office will make a mistake and return the bills to us with a yellow address sticker in error. On an active account, it may be advisable to attempt to call the customer to verify this is their new mailing address.

If mail has been returned for other reasons, like no such address, no mail receptacle, customer deceased, or return to sender, etc., attempt to contact the customer. If no customer phone number exists, look for other active accounts to find a phone number to make contact. Check to see if a more correct address can be found by using the USPS address validation tool from the update mailing address window in CSS.

If all options to locate a customer's address and/or phone number have been exhausted, put a critical "Returned Mail" account contact to expire in 3 months. This contact should state that mail has been returned to the office, no other address or phone number could be found to notify the customer. The bill can be thrown away.

[Return to top](#)

## [Potential Charge Off List](#)

- From the CSS Desktop, click on the Select from List Icon.
- The Select Criteria for List window allows you to build a Potential Charge Off List using different criteria.
- The following fields are used to build a list:

- List Type. Choose Potential Charge Off List.
  - Revenue Class
  - Company
  - Operating Center
  - Bill Group Range
  - Amount Owed Range. Lists can be built using different dollar amounts. For example, one list could be built for \$0.00 to \$150.00. Another list could be built from \$150 up.
  - Days in Collection Range. Day 1 on the Potential Charge Off List is Day 18 of the Final Bill Timeline. Accounts do not show on the Potential Charge Off List until Day 5. Accounts charge off on Day 46 of the Potential Charge Off List.
  - Bankruptcy
- After selecting the various criteria, select the Build List pushbutton. This will display the Select From Potential Charge Off List window.
  - The Select From Potential Charge Off List window displays the customer name, the total amount of the final bill, the number of overdue bills, the final bill due date, deposit alternative, debtor type, and the account number.
  - The Final Bill Due Date is the process date (billing date) for the final account, the date the final bill was generated.
  - When building a Potential Charge Off list for a certain day, the final bill due date on the accounts may be different. (Accounts went final on different days but appeared on the Potential Charge Off list the same day.) This happens because accounts can be manually removed from collections or the system can remove them from collections.
  - A collection arrangement removes an account from final collections. If a final bill arrangement defaults, CSS will check for outstanding balances on final accounts that are past the extended due date and are not in collections. These accounts are then placed in collections beginning at Day 22 of the timeline.
  - The system will automatically remove an account from collections when full payment is received. If a return check is charged back, it reopens the most current debit(s). CSS knows

the date of the debit(s) and uses this date to determine how old it is. If it is past due (in this case it would be) and not in collections (which it would not be), CSS will issue a Final Reminder Notice (which occurs at Day 22).

- By selecting an account and taking the Action of Maintain Potential Charge Off, view the following information:
  - Customer Information
  - Charge Off Information, including the Amount.
  - Mailing Address of the Final Bill
  - Action—defaults to Charge Off. Processing this window will manually charge off the account.
  - Comments – can view or add a comment.
  - Outstanding Money pushbutton – can view the Outstanding Money window. This window will show what the Next Action will be on the Final Account. (Potential Charge Off List C, Charge Off, etc.)
  - Contacts, Deposit Data, and Customer Information pushbuttons are also available from this window.

[Return to top](#)

### [Final Bill Collection Process](#)

The Final Bill Collectors currently build a list of potential charge off accounts in CSS at the beginning of each work week. The list is built for all accounts with balances due for days 26–30 (equivalent to 43–47 in the final bill timeline). These dates occur after the final bill and two CSS generated collection notices have been sent to the customer. The accounts to be worked for collection are then entered into the Final Bill Collections Access database.

[Return to top](#)

### [Free Skip–Tracing Tools](#)

There are free skip tracing sites available through the Internet. Some web sites are:

[www.usps.gov](http://www.usps.gov) – (Zip Codes)

[www.anywho.com](http://www.anywho.com)

[www.sunbiz.org](http://www.sunbiz.org) – (Corporations in Florida)

**Other skip tracing tools** will be made available at a cost to the Company. Examples: Accurint and e-Port through Equifax.

[Return to top](#)

### [Deferring Charge Offs](#)

- Accounts should only be deferred if an arrangement has been made with the customer or if there is a reasonably good chance of locating the customer and collecting the bill.
- **Do not** put a collection arrangement on the final account. Collection arrangements will remove an account from final collections. The Final Bill Collection Department should handle arrangements when the Next Collection Action is "Charge Off" or "Send to Collection Agency".
- If the "pay by" date exceeds the charge off date, defer the charge off action
- Enter an account contact explaining the details of the arrangements. Include the customer's new phone number. Also, by copying and pasting the contact in the credit standing remarks section of the maintain credit window, it will allow you to view that contact from the potential charge off list each day by going to **Actions/Account Actions/Collections/Maintain Credit Information**.
- To Defer Collections using the Maintain Potential Charge Off window, the account must be within 30 work days of charge off. From the bill account, **Actions/Account Actions/Collections/Enter Charge Off Actions** or from the **Potential Charge Off list**, take the **Action of Maintain Potential Charge Off**.
- Accounts can be deferred anytime using the Maintain Credit window. The path is **Actions/Account Actions/Collections/Maintain Credit Info**. Select the bill account number and click the Change pushbutton. The Charge Off date can be changed under the Next Service Action date.



- To determine if an account has been deferred, check the scheduled charge off date in the Outstanding Money window. If the current date is past this date and there is not a non-service business or a guaranty, then the account has been deferred.
- The process to defer charge off DOES NOT create a contact. Therefore, adding an account contact each time is very important.
- Do not place Special Agreements on a final bill account. This sets the final bill account back to a status of Active and the Account Type to Final Service Active. Even though the account status is active, no event will occur to cause the system to bill the installments for the Special Agreement.

[Return to top](#)

## [Transfer Policy](#)

The following criteria should be followed in transferring final bills and charge offs to active accounts:

1. Match on social security number AND customer name. Transfers should not be made unless we can verify that we have a match. If the names and the social security numbers are not the same, or until we have other documentation or information to confirm a positive match, the transfer should not be completed.

Before transferring the money, reconcile the customer records (if necessary), reinstate the charge off, and use the Post Transfer process to transfer the money. Be sure to create contacts on both accounts.

2. Rates or class of service must be the same for the charged off account and the active account. Both the charged off account and the active account must be the same rate or class of service (Residential, General Service, etc.). For example, charged off residential service can only be transferred to an active residential account, and we cannot transfer a charged-off electric service balance to an active non-service (ex: merchandise) only account, even if the customer is the same.

Tariff Rule: According to Florida's Tariff for Retail Electric Service under Section No. IV, 2.6 Payment of Previous Accounts Required, it states that "Applications for service will not be accepted by the Company until the applicant has paid to the Company all sums at any time owing and then unpaid: (1) by Applicant for service of the same class".

Rule 4.11 Refusal or Discontinuance of Service, (8) The following shall not constitute sufficient cause for refusal or discontinuance of service to an Applicant or Customer: (d) Failure to pay for a different class of service.

3. Roommates, spouse or family members must have occupied the charged off premise at the time the delinquency occurred and must continue to occupy the active premise and be receiving benefit of the service.

Tariff Rule: According to Florida's Tariff for Retail Electric Service under Section No. IV, 2.6 Payment of Previous Accounts Required, it states, "Applications for service will not be accepted by the Company until the Applicant has paid to the Company all sums at any time owing and then unpaid: (2) By the previous occupant of the premises as long as the current Applicant or Customer occupied the premises at the time the delinquency occurred and the previous Customer continues to occupy the premises and such previous Customer shall benefit from such service".

4. Do not transfer bill from guarantee's account to guarantor's account.

Our only recourse is to "encourage" guarantors to make payment of the guarantee's bill based on the Guarantee Agreement they signed. It is not our policy to transfer final bills to the guarantors account.

Tariff Rule: 4.11 Refusal or Discontinuance of Service, (8) The following shall **not** constitute sufficient cause for refusal or discontinuance of service to an Applicant or Customer: (e) Failure to pay the bill of another Customer as guarantor thereof.

5. Transferring outstanding bills between two different customers: A customer may ask to have another customers outstanding bill transferred to their account due to roommate situations, divorce, etc. This is acceptable as long as the CSR that transferred the money in CSS between the 2 accounts follows up to ensure the customer that we transferred the money to is not cut for non-payment for the other persons bill. Place a contact on both accounts explaining that the money was transferred at the customers request.
6. If a charged-off amount is eligible for transfers to the active account, the customer must be notified in writing of the actions taken. Transfer the debt, send the customer a letter notifying them of the action taken, and allow the amount to fall into the normal collections routine. We will NOT manually send a separate five day disconnect notice or a follow up Cut Out order. We will use the normal collections routine which allows us to better utilize our field personnel and allows us to utilize the CSS automatic cut-in feature to insure the account is restored when payment is made.

7. An Account Contact MUST be noted each time we contact the customer. Absolutely, without fail, a contact must be noted on the account every time we make contact with the customer, whether we talk to them, leave a phone mail message or send written correspondence. This allows us to be aware of the history on this account in case the customer calls the CSC or comes to the local office.

Once a decision is made to contact a customer, the customer needs to be dealt with based on the individual circumstances. If the customer disputes the charges, the Final Bill group needs to handle them and resolve their dispute in accordance with the Southern style.

[Return to top](#)

## [Mobius Reports](#)

### [Uncollectible Exception Report: Daily Mobius Report #CCS509DP](#)

The "Uncollectible Exception Report" is a daily, system generated report which provides final accounts that are past the time to charge off but will not charge off due to some type of exception. The report is located on Mobius, ID CCS509DP and contains accounts for all companies. From Mobius, use the "Find" button to locate Gulf's pages beginning with the Bonifay office.

Listed below are some of the exceptions:

- **Account has Guarantee Letter** – For accounts that are coded Guarantee, the Guarantee code must be deleted for the account to charge off or come off the Potential Charge Off list. The proper steps should have been taken to collect the final bill from the guarantor. To delete the code, **Actions/Account Actions/Deposit/Maintain Deposit Alternative**. Click on the Delete pushbutton and change the reason to Waive.
- **A Non-Service business is on the account** – If an account has a non-service business that is identified with a charge off flag of "No", the service business will not charge off until the non-service business is transferred or written off the account. Examples of non-service businesses that will not charge off are merchandise late pay fees, project share, surge protection, and some revenue protection charges. A Non-Service Collection report is generated on these accounts. The Appliance Sales Collection department and Lisa Porter in the Century office research these accounts.
- **The account has a deposit on hand** – This situation could be a bill account transfer where the "to" account is not active. Determine if the deposit should be refunded, applied to a final bill, or transferred to another account.

- **Bill Account Transfer is pending** – This situation could be a bill account transfer where the "to" account is not active. Perhaps the connect was voided and the bill account transfer could not be completed. Some of these accounts are due to CSS Analysis work items that have not been worked.
- **Termination Date is required** – In some instances, this situation is due to pending stop on Budget Billing. This should be turned in as a problem report.
- **A service order is pending** – Pending orders exist on the account. Research and determine if orders should be voided or if a problem exists.
- **Deferred Budget Bill Balance is on Account** – Pending stop on Budget Billing is preventing the account from charging off. This should be reported as a problem.
- **Payment received in the last two weeks** – In order to make sure we are not charging off accounts for which we are still receiving payments, CSS Collections will check to see if a payment has been received within the two weeks prior to the scheduled charge off date. If a payment has been received, it will put the account on the exception report. The account should be reviewed to determine if it should be deferred from charge off since payments are being received.

**Matched Charge Off Accounts to Active Accounts Based on Social Security: Daily Mobius Report #FCS521DP**

Accounts will appear on this daily report when the new account is activated and the social security number matches on an existing charged off account. An account will only appear on the report one day. If the account is missed, it will appear on the monthly report.

The report shows account established date, social security number, class of service, active account and charged off account information.

This report is not being worked at this time.

**Matching Charge Off/Final Accounts to Active Accounts Based on Social Security Number: Monthly Mobius Report #FCR106MP**

This monthly report lists all charged off and final collection accounts with a social security number match on an existing active account. Accounts will remain on this monthly list unless action is taken to remove or transfer the charges.

The letters CHG indicate charge off accounts and FNL indicate final accounts.

The Final Bill Collection group should work this report monthly. The "[Transfer Policy](#)" guidelines found in this document should be followed carefully in making transfers.

#### **Uncollectible List Report: Monthly Mobius Report #FCR227MP**

This monthly Mobius report lists by Operating Center accounts that have charged off during the revenue month. The report shows customer name, bill account number, business (service, merchandise, etc), class of service, charge off date and charge off amount.

This report can be sorted to view data in various categories using a model in Mobius.

The Final Bill Collection department should work this report as soon as possible each month to determine if accounts are listed that could be collected, i.e., apartments, realtors, builders.

#### **Accounts Turned Over to Collection Agencies: Monthly Mobius Report # FCS518MP**

This monthly Mobius report lists by Operating Center Accounts that have been charged off and turned over to Collection Agencies. This report is run on the 15th of every month. If the 15th is on the weekend or holiday it will be the next working day.

[Return to top](#)

### **[Probate Processes](#)**

Reference the [Probate Processes jobaid](#) for detailed procedures on working with electric accounts involved in Probate.

[Return to top](#)

### **[Deceased Process \(Estates & Trusts\)](#)**

Reference the [Estates & Trusts jobaid](#) for detailed procedures on working with accounts in a deceased name.

[Return to top](#)