

Filing A Formal Complaint with the Public Utilities Commission (PUC)

A step-by-step guide for Hawaii consumers

1. Determine if Your Issue Qualifies as a PUC Complaint

The PUC oversees regulated public utilities such as:

- Electricity (Hawaiian Electric, Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative)
 - Privately-owned water and wastewater companies
 - Gas (Hawaii Gas)
 - Telecommunications (landline phone services)
 - Transportation of goods (e.g., Young Brothers – interisland shipping)
 - Passenger motor carriers (e.g. tour companies)
- If your issue involves **billing disputes, service disconnections, quality of service, or rates**, it may qualify.

If your concern involves unregulated utilities (e.g., internet-only providers, cell phone carriers, or cable TV), the PUC cannot investigate. The DCA can still help refer you to the right agency.

For more information, visit the [PUC FAQs](#) page and find the "**What is a Formal Complaint?**" section.

2. Contact the Utility First

Before filing a formal complaint, you must try to resolve the issue directly with your utility company.

- Record the date, time, and name of the representative you spoke with.
- Keep copies of bills, correspondence, or notes from those discussions.

If you need assistance contacting or communicating with your utility company, contact DCA at (808) 586-2800.

If the issue is not resolved, you may proceed to file a complaint with the PUC.

3. Submit an Informal Complaint to the PUC

Before filing a formal complaint, note that most customer issues may be resolved through the PUC's informal complaint process. Through informal complaints, the PUC can investigate requests for refunds, resolve billing issues, and more. Details for filing informal

complaints against all utilities and for reporting Motor Carrier Violations may be found on the PUC's [website](#).

4. Submit a Formal Complaint to the PUC

You can file a formal complaint by submitting:

- A written complaint to the PUC (address below) describing the issue and what resolution you are seeking. Under [HAR § 16-601-67](#), a formal complaint must:
 - include the full name and address of each complainant;
 - include the full name and address of the Utility;
 - clearly and concisely state the specific complaint;
 - advise on all the facts constituting the grounds of the complaint;
 - include any relevant documentation;
 - specify, if a violation of law is alleged, the particular parts of the law which are alleged to have been violated and the facts relied upon to establish the violation;
 - and substantially comply with the applicable provisions in [HAR § 16-601-15 through HAR § 16-601-21](#).

Electronically file on the Public Utilities Commission's website or deliver/mail your complaint by first class mail to:

Public Utilities Commission

465 South King Street, Room 103

Honolulu, HI 96813

5. After Filing

After the PUC receives your complaint, it will be reviewed to make sure it is complete and falls under authority.

- **If your complaint meets the requirements** described in the rules, the PUC will send a copy to the utility company. The utility will then have **20 days** to submit a written response.
- **If your complaint does not meet the requirements**, the PUC will return it to you along with an explanation of what needs to be corrected.

Please note: The DCA may participate in the proceeding to represent consumer interests, but does not act as your personal attorney.

6. Need Additional Help?

Contact the Division of Consumer Advocacy (DCA):

- Phone: (808) 586-2800
- Email: consumeradvocate@dcca.hawaii.gov
- Website: cca.hawaii.gov/dca

The DCA is here to help you understand your rights, navigate the process, and make sure your voice is heard.