

Initial Response to a Dispute Claim

Last Modified on 12/23/2025 9:02 am EST

When a customer says they want to dispute their bill, follow this protocol:

Step 1: Acknowledge and Validate

Don't be defensive. Even if you think the bill is correct, acknowledge their concern.

"I understand you're questioning the charges on your bill. I'm here to help investigate this with you. Let me pull up your account and we'll review everything together."

Never say:

- "The bill is correct, our system doesn't make mistakes"
- "You probably just used more electricity"
- "Everyone's bills are higher in summer"

Step 2: Gather Information

Ask specific questions:

For usage disputes:

- "When did you first notice the usage seemed high?"
- "Has anything changed in your home? New appliances, more people, temperature settings?"
- "Were you away during this billing period?"
- "Have you checked your actual meter reading?"

For rate/charge disputes:

- "Which specific charge are you questioning?"
- "What do you believe the correct charge should be?"
- "Do you have a previous bill we can compare to?"

For billing errors:

- "Can you describe what you believe is incorrect?"
- "Do you have documentation (receipts, confirmation numbers, emails)?"

Step 3: Set Expectations

"I'm going to thoroughly investigate your account. This will take me [5-10 minutes/24 hours/etc.] to review. What

I'm looking for is [explain what you'll check]. If I find an error, we'll correct it immediately. If the billing appears accurate, I'll explain exactly how the charges were calculated so you understand. Does that sound good?"

Step 4: Create a Dispute Case

In the system:

- Open a formal dispute case
- Select dispute type
- Enter customer's specific claim
- Document all relevant details
- Assign to appropriate investigation queue if needed

Case documentation example:"Customer disputes usage charges on bill #123456 (billing period 11/1-11/30). Claims they were out of town for 2 weeks and usage of 1,200 kWh is impossible. Customer requests investigation of meter accuracy. Initiating full account review."
