

 FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION	CARES BULLETIN
	Effective Date: Immediately
Issuance Date: 09/03/04	Control Number: 05-03

**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS**

FROM: KEVIN M. MCGUIRE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR , FIA

RE: HOUSEHOLDS THAT SHARE UTILITIES

PROGRAMS AFFECTED: FOOD STAMPS

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY, RESEARCH, AND SYSTEMS

Summary:

AT 04-08 simplified the policy for prorating the utility allowances when households share utility expenses by informing Case Managers not to prorate the SUA or LUA. Effective September 1, 2004 CARES will support the new policy by setting the "No. of HHs Sharing Utilities" field to "1" and hiding the field on the SHEL screen.

Action Required:

Effective August 23, 2004 and beginning with the September 2004 benefit month, CARES will no longer display the field "No. of HH's Sharing Utilities." All active AUs with values greater than "1" in the "No. of HH's Sharing Utilities" will automatically have their value updated to "1" by CARES. Some food stamp cases will increase because of this change. Notices will be sent to those customers informing them of any change in their benefits. Historical benefit months will continue to have the field displayed and can be updated. The CARES guideline for determining the correct utility allowance provided in AT 04-08 is obsolete. Please use the attached revised guideline for determining the correct utility allowance.

If you have any questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Joyce Westbrook at 410-238-1299.

cc: DHR Executive Staff
FIA Management Staff
DHR System Support Center

CARES PROCEDURES:

The following is a guideline for determining the correct utility allowance:

Utility Allowance	Criteria	CARES Action
Standard Utility Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Households billed separately from rent or mortgage for utility costs that include heating or cooling ♦ Money paid to someone else towards heating or cooling costs ♦ Shared utility expenses for heating and cooling ♦ Households in public housing that are billed for excess usage of heating or cooling costs ♦ Households that include an ineligible member who pays the bill 	Enter "Y" in the SUA field on the SHEL screen
Limited Utility Allowance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Households that incur expenses for two or more utilities that do not include heating or cooling costs ♦ Shared expense for two or more utilities that does not include heating and cooling costs ♦ Households in public housing that are billed for excess usage of two or more utility expenses that do not include heating or cooling. ♦ Households that include an ineligible member who pays the bills 	Enter "Y" in the LUA field on the SHEL screen
Actual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Only one utility other than phone, heating or cooling expense ♦ Shared expense of one utility other than telephone 	Enter "Y" in the "Actual Expenses Claimed" field and the actual amount of the expense in the appropriate field on the SHEL screen
Telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Pays for telephone only 	Enter a "Y" in "Phone Only" field on the SHEL screen

UTILITY ALLOWANCE REFERENCE GUIDE

HOUSEHOLD SITUATION	SU A	LUA	ACTUAL EXPENSE	CASE MANAGER ACTION	CODING SHEL SCREEN
Billed for heat, including flat rate to landlord for heat.	√			Allow the full SUA	Put a Y in SUA
Billed for cooling, including flat rate to landlord for cooling.	√			Allow the full SUA	Put a Y in SUA
Billed for any 2 or more utilities but not heat or cooling.		√		Allow the full LUA	Put a Y in LUA
Billed for heating or cooling that are more than the SUA.	√			Allow full SUA. <i>Do not use actual expenses.</i>	Put a Y in SUA
Billed for two or more utilities that are more than the LUA.		√		Allow full LUA. <i>Do Not use actual expenses.</i>	Put a Y in LUA
Billed for telephone only.				Allow the full basic phone allowance	Put a Y next to phone
Billed for excess usage of heating or cooling. Either private or public housing.	√			Allow the full SUA. Verify expense and amount	Put a Y in SUA
Billed for excess usage of two or more utilities but not heating or cooling. Either private or public housing.		√		Allow the full LUA. Verify expense and amount	Put a Y in LUA
Multiple households live together and each pays a portion of the utilities (sharing) including heat.	√			Each FS household is eligible for the Full SUA	Put a Y in SUA
Multiple households live together. One pays the heat while the other household pays (sharing) the other utilities.	√			Allow the Full SUA for both households	Put a Y in SUA
Customer lives with her mother who is not part of the FS household. Mother pays all shelter expenses for the customer.				Do not allow any shelter expenses	None
Husband, wife, and 3 children live together. Husband is an ineligible immigrant (ABAWD, no SSN, etc). HH is billed for utilities and heat separately from the rent. Husband pays all expenses.	√			Allow the full SUA	Put a Y in SUA
Household pays for water only. (1 utility)			√	Enter the actual amount paid monthly	Enter the amount in the appropriate field under Actual Expenses claimed
Household contains an ineligible immigrant and pays for 1 utility only.			√	Enter the full actual amount	CARES will prorate the expense of the ineligible person

Remember:

SUA = heating or cooling costs (not a fan or supplemental heating such as a wood stove)

LUA = any two or more utilities – no heat or cooling costs (for example: water, gas, trash pick up, electric)

Actual Utility = one utility that does not include heating or cooling costs or cost of the phone. Actual utility costs are the only utility costs that are prorated because of ineligible members.

Telephone = Households with only a phone expense are eligible for the basic phone allowance.