

## Verification Call Script for Non-Residential Consumers – Natural Gas Contracts Entered into by Mail

For use on and after January 1, 2017

### Instructions for the use of this script:

1. This script must only be used for non-residential consumers that have entered into a contract for natural gas by mail.
2. In this script, the term “energy retailer” is used to refer to the gas marketer.
3. The verification call must be terminated if Ontario Regulation 389/10 (General) made under the *Energy Consumer Protection Act, 2010* (the ECPA Regulation) or this script so requires. Among other things:
  - a. The ECPA Regulation requires that the verification representative stop the verification process if he or she is made aware that the energy retailer has committed an unfair practice, or if the verification representative has reasonable grounds to believe that the energy retailer has committed an unfair practice. Among other things, this requires that the verification representative terminate the verification process if at any time the verification representative knows or ought to know that the consumer is not reasonably able to protect his or her interests by reason of inability to understand English, physical or mental disability, ignorance, illiteracy or another disadvantage.
  - b. The verification representative must terminate the call if at any time it appears that the verification call is taking place on a date that is outside the window allowed by the ECPA Regulation.

Where the verification call must be terminated for any of the above reasons or as otherwise required by this script, before terminating the call the verification representative must advise the consumer that the verification process cannot continue and must explain in plain language the reason why that is the case. In providing that explanation, the verification representative cannot make any statements regarding any benefit to the consumer that may be lost as a result of the termination of the verification process, but must indicate in neutral terms that the contract will become invalid and that the consumer’s energy supply arrangements will remain as they are on the date of the call.

4. If at any time the consumer indicates that he or she is not comfortable with the verification call being recorded, the verification representative shall explain to the consumer why the verification process cannot proceed. The verification representative may ask the consumer if there is a more convenient time to call again, but otherwise the call must then be terminated.

5. This script must be followed in the order presented below. Statements or questions in italics must be given or made verbatim as written. If the verification representative has any additional questions for the consumer, these may be asked once the script has been completed.
6. Where a question or statement calls for a yes or no response from the consumer and the consumer answers no, except where alternative instructions are provided in the script the verification representative must end the call.

#### **A. Mandatory Greeting**

If at any time during the Greeting portion of the script the consumer indicates that the consumer did not enter into a contract with the energy retailer, or does not recall having entered into a contract with the energy retailer, the verification agent may make up to two attempts to jog the consumer's memory. If the consumer still does not recall having entered into the contract, the verification representative may offer to send the consumer a copy of the signed contract and the disclosure statement and price comparison. The verification representative may also ask the consumer if there is a convenient time to call again once the documents have been sent to the consumer, but otherwise must end the call.

1. The verification representative must provide the following information:
  - a. The name of the verification representative.
  - b. The name of the energy retailer on whose behalf the verification representative is acting.
  - c. The name of the company that employs the verification representative.
2. The verification representative may greet the consumer by name, and then must explain the purpose of the call:
  - a. For an inbound call: *May I please confirm that you are calling to verify that you would like to continue with a contract to buy natural gas from [energy retailer name] for the business at [address]? Y/N*

If the consumer answers no, the verification representative may offer to refer the consumer to the energy retailer to answer the consumer's enquiry, but otherwise must end the call. No additional explanation for ending the call is required.

- b. For an outbound call: *Our records show that you signed up for a contract by mail to buy natural gas for the business at [address]. I am calling today to confirm that you would like to continue with that contract.*
3. The verification representative must explain that the call is being recorded, after which the verification representative must add the following: *If you are not comfortable with this call being recorded, please let me know at any time.*
4. The verification representative must ask the consumer if the consumer would like an opportunity to retrieve a copy of the contract, the disclosure statement and price comparison for reference purposes before proceeding with the call.

**B. Mandatory Questions and Statements**

1. *Am I speaking with the person whose name is on the natural gas bills for the business at [address]? Y/N*

If the consumer answers no, the verification representative may ask if the account holder is available for the call. If the consumer answers no, the verification representative may ask whether the consumer is authorized by the account holder to enter into a contract to buy natural gas for the business. When referring to the account holder, the verification representative must always refer to “the person whose name is on the natural gas bills” for the business. If no person that is legally permitted to enter into the contract comes to the phone, the verification representative must end the call.

2. The verification representative must confirm the consumer’s full name, and may if desired confirm the consumer’s gas account number.
3. *Before I go on, I first have to record that today’s date is [month, day, year].*
4. *Can you please confirm for me that you signed up for a contract by mail to buy natural gas from [energy retailer name] for the business? Y/N*

If the consumer answers no or does not recall whether they signed up for the contract, the verification representative may make up to two attempts to jog the consumer's memory. If the consumer still does not confirm having entered into the contract, the verification representative may offer to send the consumer a copy of the signed contract and the disclosure statement and price comparison. The verification representative may also ask the consumer if there is a convenient time to call again once the documents have been sent to the consumer, but otherwise must end the call.

5. *I have some other questions to ask you so that we can confirm that you would like to continue with the contract. But before I do that, I have to tell you that you don't have to confirm that you want to continue with the contract if you don't want to. If you don't want to continue with the contract, you will keep buying your natural gas like you do today. And you won't have to pay any cancellation fees. Do you have any questions about that?*

If the consumer has questions, the verification representative may answer them. If the verification representative does not answer a consumer's question, or the consumer indicates that they do not understand something after an explanation has been given, the verification representative may ask the consumer if there is a convenient time to call again with the answer to the consumer's question but otherwise must end the call. If the consumer indicates that they do not have any questions, the verification representative may go on to question 6.

6. *Do you understand that, if you confirm that you want to continue with the contract today, you will be buying your natural gas from [energy retailer name] for [X] years? Y/N*

7. *[Energy retailer name] was required to provide you with the important documents together with the contract. I just want to make sure that you did in fact get all of that information. So I am going to ask you a few questions about that.*

The verification representative must ask questions (a) through (c) below. If, in response to any question, the consumer does not recall signing the contract or receiving the contract, disclosure statement or price comparison (as applicable), the verification representative may offer to send the consumer a copy of the signed contract and the disclosure statement and price comparison. The verification representative may also ask the consumer if there is a convenient time to call again once the documents have been sent to the consumer, but otherwise must end the call.

- (a) *First, did you sign the contract on [month, day, year] and sent it back to [energy retailer name]? Y/N*
- (b) *When you got the contract, did you also receive a disclosure statement that explains basic information about energy contracts and your rights and responsibilities as an energy consumer? Y/N*
- (c) *When you got the contract, did you also receive a price comparison that explains how [energy retailer name's] price for natural gas compares to the price charged by your natural gas utility? Y/N*
8. *I now need to ask you some questions to make sure you understand what you will be paying for natural gas under the contract. Before I go on, I need to tell you that there is no guarantee that the contract will save you any money on*

*your natural gas.*

9. The verification representative must explain the contract price for natural gas. The verification representative must ask:

*Do you have any questions about how much you will be paying for natural gas under the contract?*

If the consumer has questions, the verification representative may answer them. If the verification representative does not answer a consumer's question, or the consumer indicates that they still do not understand something after an explanation has been given, the verification representative must end the call. If the consumer indicates that they do not have any questions, the verification representative may go on to question 10.

10. *We've now covered what you will be paying for natural gas under the contract. I have to explain that the contract price only covers part of your bill. You will continue to be responsible for paying other charges like delivery charges, the debt retirement charge and taxes. Do you have any questions about the other charges you will still have to pay on top of the contract price?*

If the consumer has questions, the verification representative may answer them.

If the verification representative does not answer a consumer's question, or the consumer indicates that they still do not understand something after an explanation has been given, the verification representative must end the call. If the consumer indicates that they do not have any questions, the verification representative may go on to question 11.

11. *Do you agree to continue with the contract to buy natural gas from [energy retailer name] for [X] years at the price we talked about today? Y/N*

If the consumer indicates they want more time to decide, the verification representative may attempt to schedule another verification call on a later date, but otherwise must end the call.

12. *If you change your mind about the contract, you can tell [energy retailer name] that you want to cancel the contract up to 30 days after you receive the second bill that shows the contract price. You have to pay that bill, but you won't have to pay any cancellation fees. If you cancel after that, you may have to pay a cancellation fee. Do you have any questions about that?*

If the consumer has questions, the verification representative may answer them or refer the consumer to the contract for details about the consumer's cancellation rights. If the verification representative does not answer a consumer's question, or the consumer indicates that they still do not understand something after an explanation has been given, the verification representative must end the call. If the consumer indicates that they do not have any questions, the verification representative may go on to question 13.

13. *You can get information about energy contracts, energy prices and your rights and responsibilities as an energy consumer from the Ontario Energy Board. The Ontario Energy Board is the independent government agency that oversees the electricity and natural gas sectors in Ontario. Would you like the Ontario Energy Board's website address or toll-free number? Y/N*

If the consumer answers yes, the verification representative must provide the OEB's contact details.