

§ 14-151.1. Interfering with electric, gas or water meters; prima facie evidence of intent to alter, tamper with or bypass electric, gas or water meters; unlawful reconnection of electricity, gas, or water; civil liability.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any unauthorized person to alter, tamper with or bypass a meter which has been installed for the purpose of measuring the use of electricity, gas or water or knowingly to use electricity, gas or water passing through any such tampered meter or use electricity, gas or water bypassing a meter provided by an electric, gas or water supplier for the purpose of measuring and registering the quantity of electricity, gas or water consumed.

(b) Any meter or service entrance facility found to have been altered, tampered with, or bypassed in a manner that would cause such meter to inaccurately measure and register the electricity, gas or water consumed or which would cause the electricity, gas or water to be diverted from the recording apparatus of the meter shall be **prima facie** evidence of intent to violate and of the violation of this section by the person in whose name such meter is installed or the person or persons so using or receiving the benefits of such unmetered, unregistered or diverted electricity, gas or water.

(b1) It is unlawful for any unauthorized person to reconnect electricity, gas, or water connections or otherwise turn back on one or more of those utilities when they have been lawfully disconnected or turned off by the provider of the utility.

(b2) It is unlawful for any unauthorized person to alter, bypass, interfere with, or cut off any load management device, equipment, or system which has been installed by the electricity supplier for the purpose of limiting the use of electricity at peak-load periods, provided, however, if there has been a written request to remove the load management device, equipment or system to the electric supplier and the electric supplier has not removed the device within two working days, there shall be no violation of this section.

(c) Any person violating any of the provisions of this section shall be guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(d) Whoever is found in a civil action to have violated any provision hereof shall be liable to the electric, gas or water supplier in triple the amount of losses and damages sustained or five hundred dollars (\$500.00), whichever is greater.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed to apply to licensed contractors while performing usual and ordinary services in accordance with recognized customs and standards. (1977, c.735, s. 1; 1983, c. 508, ss. 1, 2; 1989, c. 119; 1993, c. 539, s.89; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c).)