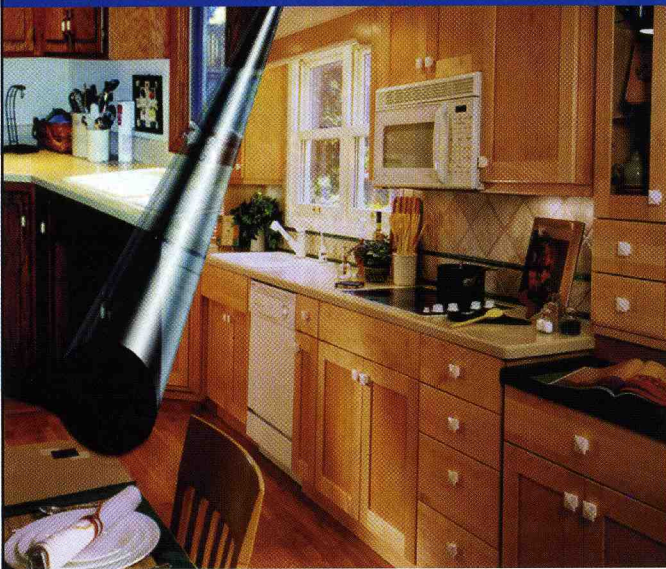


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home economics

Finally, keep in mind that Atlanta Gas Light Company allows a consumer to switch to a new marketer once in a 12-month period without a fee. After that, a \$7.50 charge applies.

Alpert says that based on the calls that come into the show and Howard's Consumer Action Center, no one gas provider stands out as a customer favorite. "We even had a poll on our Clark's Web site years ago, and they all seemed to do a good job with some problems [that would arise] from time to time," she says. So do your research and make an informed decision, and you'll find the provider that's best for you and stay warm in winter.

QUESTIONS to the marketers


WHAT IS YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE RECORD?

- Gauge the marketer's call center performance by calling customer service a few times throughout the day to determine length of hold. Note the attitude and knowledge of the marketer's customer service representatives.
- Know the call center hours of operation.
- Is there a toll free number if the company is not local?
- Find out how quickly customer disputes are handled.
- Find out if the marketer has a good reputation.
- Check the marketer scorecard on the GPSC Web site.

HOW DO YOUR PRICES COMPARE TO OTHERS IN THE NATURAL GAS MARKET IN GEORGIA?

- Understand all the costs associated with bringing gas to your home.
- Carefully consider all the pricing plans the marketer offers.
- Find out if the rate for the pricing plan is fixed or variable.
- Find out if any discounts are offered.

WHAT ARE YOUR TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE?

- Carefully read all materials provided to you by the marketer.
- Ask about billing and payment options.
- Find out the marketer's procedure for assessing a deposit.
- Find out what the disconnect and reconnect fees are.
- Find out if there is a cancellation fee.
- Find out about any switching procedures and fees. 

Editorial Resources begin on page 141.