Shelter Expenses / Standard Utility Allowances

1. Trash expense may NOT be given for which of the following:
   A) Privately contracted collection (dumpster service)
   B) Generic trash bags available in retail stores
   C) Specially marked bags available in municipalities
   D) Complimentary landfill access stickers for residents’ vehicles
   E) Stickers purchased for plastic bags for curbside pickup

   **D. Complimentary landfill access stickers for residents’ vehicles.**
   There is no additional cost for complimentary stickers. These are “paid” through property taxes.
   FS 555-5, pg 7

2. Non-heat utility expenses may result in a figure other than $203 when the client:
   A) Requests use of actual non-heat utility costs
   B) Pays only one non-heat utility expense
   C) Pays for only a telephone expense
   D) All of the above
   E) None of the above

   **D. All of the above**
   FS 555-5, pg 7

3. A 58-year-old individual who receives VA benefits based on a 50% disability is eligible to have the shelter cap lifted.

   **False**
   If this individual is eligible for SSI Related MaineCare, the shelter cap may be lifted, but the VA disability determination at 50% does not make him FS Disabled.
   FS 999-1, p 3

4. Homeless households may receive a shelter deduction of $143 monthly – but only if they expect to pay for lodging.

   **True**
   FS 555-5, p 5

5. Jeannette moves into an apartment on May 1st. The rent is $300 monthly. For the first three months, she will pay $450 a month to cover the $450 security deposit that the landlord spread over three months. You’re allowed to budget $450 month rent with the appropriate start and end dates in ACES.

   **False**
   Security deposits are held by the landlord to cover damages. Unused portions are returned to the occupant when they leave. Therefore, they are not allowable shelter costs.
   FS 555-5, p 5 and 11
6. Two people share an apartment, claiming separate households. The heat is included in the rent. They split the non-heat expenses 50/50. One receives Food Supplement benefits, the other does not. You divide the appropriate utility allowance between two people.

True
FS 555-5, p 7

7. If Sarah Winstead receives a $5.00 HEAP benefit on November 9, 2008, she will be eligible for the full standard utility allowance at least until:
A) September 30, 2011
B) November 8, 2009
C) November 8, 2013
D) September 30, 2013
E) None of the above

A. September 30, 2011

The $5 benefit (formerly $1) is good for “up to five years. It covers the period of the allocation as authorized by the legislature. Currently, this five-year period begins October 1, 2006 and expires September 30, 2011.
FS 555-5, p 6

8. Since the cost of petroleum fuels has increased so dramatically, many clients’ best choice is to claim actual utility expense if they are paying for heat costs.

False

Although that might be their “best choice”, it is NOT an option. Clients paying for heat can receive ONLY the full utility allowance. They cannot claim actual expenses, regardless of the excessive burden.
FS 555-5, p 6

9. Clients may take out home equity loans to access the cash available in their houses for many reasons, such as reducing their credit card debt. This expense:
A) Cannot be used - only one mortgage per household
B) Cannot be used - the money may be used for something other than shelter costs
C) Can be used since their ownership would be jeopardized by non-payment
D) Can be used whether they pay it or not since they are responsible for the repayment

C Can be used since their ownership would be jeopardized by non-payment
FS 555-5, p 5

10. Annette prefers to claim her actual utility expenses instead of the non-heat utility standard because they are consistently higher for nine months of the year. She must provide verification of all of these costs to receive actual averaged expense.

True
FS 555-5, p 7 and 222-5, p 1
11. Scott and Bill share an apartment. Bill pays only for the phone and electricity. Scott pays for water and sewer bills. They share the heat expense. Each of them gets one half of the full standard utility allowance.

**False**
The full standard utility allowance is not prorated. Each of them receives the FSUA.
FS 555-5, p 6

12. Karen and Dan share an apartment. They declare themselves separate households, but they are engaged to be married next spring, so they cannot be considered separate.

**False**
If they declare (by signing the Purchase and Prepare Letter) that they are purchasing and preparing their own food, their engagement is not relevant. Only spousal relationships (and parental role) influence household composition.
FS 111-1, p 2 and 3