

ANNUAL NOTICE TO ALL RESIDENTIAL UTILITY CUSTOMERS

Cold Weather Rule MN Stat §216B.097

Protections

A municipal utility must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 1st and April 30th if the disconnection affects the primary heat source and customer meets the eligibility criteria below.

Customer Eligibility

The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. A municipal utility or cooperative electric association utility may (i) verify income on forms it provides or (ii) obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, which uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income.

A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.

A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

Customer Notification Before Disconnection

Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during the period between October 1st and April 30th, a municipal utility or co-op must provide the customer all of the following:

1. A notice of the proposed disconnection
2. A statement explaining the customer's rights and responsibilities
3. A list of local energy assistance providers
4. Forms on which to declare the inability to pay
5. A statement explaining available time payment plans and other opportunities to secure continued utility service accept payment, and continue service, offers a payment agreement to the customer.

Non-Responsive Customer

If a customer does not respond to a disconnection notice, the customer must not be disconnected until the utility investigates whether the residential unit is actually occupied.

1. If the unit is found to be occupied, the utility must immediately inform the occupant of the provisions of the Cold Weather Rule.
2. If the unit is unoccupied, the utility must give seven days written notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy assistance provider before making a disconnection.

Disconnection Restrictions

If a residential customer is to be involuntarily disconnected between October 1st and April 30th, the disconnection may not occur:

1. On a Friday, unless that day the customer declines to enter in to a payment agreement offered by the municipal utility or co-op via personal contact or telephone.
2. On a weekend, holiday, or day before a holiday.
3. When utility offices are closed.
4. After the close of business, unless a field representative of the utility who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement.

Disconnection must not occur until at least 30 days after the disconnection notice (described above) has been mailed to the customer or 15 days after the notice has been personally delivered to the customer.

Customer Appeals

Under the Cold Weather Rule, if a customer appeals a notice of involuntary disconnection prior to disconnection, as provided by the utility's established appeal procedure, the utility must not disconnect the customer until the appeal is resolved.

Service Limiters

Under the Cold Weather Rule, "disconnection" includes a service or load limiter or any device that limits or interrupts electric service in any way

Need help reading or understanding notices from your utility?

You may arrange for another person to receive copies of any disconnection notices or other important information by submitting a Third Party Notice form. The person listed to receive Third Party Notice is *NOT* responsible for payment.

What if I can't pay my bill?

Help is a phone call away. MAHUBE-OTWA provides energy assistance to those who may have difficulty paying their utility bill. If you are in need of energy assistance, please contact MAHUBE-OTWA at 218-847-1385 or visit www.mahube.org, or contact Becker County Social Services at 218-847-5628.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE

The energy assistance program helps low-income households pay their home heating bills. Payments are made directly to the household's fuel dealer.

Eligibility:

- ◆ Eligibility is based on household gross income for the past one month, household size and consumption for the past 12 months.
- ◆ Applicants may rent or own their home.
- ◆ Households must provide proof of income when they apply.
- ◆ There are no deductions from income.
- ◆ Households may also be eligible for Repair or Replacement of nonfunctioning heating systems.

Income Guidelines	
Household Size	1 Month Maximum
1	\$2,983
2	\$3,901
3	\$4,819
4	\$5,737
5	\$6,655
6	\$7,572
7	\$7,745
8	\$7,917