

## Utility Requirements

Before disconnecting service between October 15 and April 15, your natural gas and electric utility company must give you:

- Notice of disconnection
- Payment plan options to stop a disconnection
- Appeal rights if you and the utility cannot agree on a CWR payment plan
- Energy assistance and weatherization providers in your area
- No-cost and low-cost ways to save energy
- A Third Party Notice form

## Help Reading or Understanding Notices

If you have trouble reading utility bills and notices, fill out a Third Party Notice form. This tells your utility to send copies to the person you choose so you don't miss important dates.

The Third Party is not responsible for paying your bills.

## What if I can't pay my bill?

### Help is a phone call away!

Energy Assistance 1-800-657-3710

The Salvation Army HeatShare 1-800-842-7279

United Way 211 - Dial 211

### Did you know?

If you receive Energy Assistance, you may also qualify for

- Gas Affordability Program
- Low Income Electric Rate Discount
- Other program discounts

Call your natural gas or electric company for more information on these discounts.



### Consumer Affairs Office

121 7th Place E, Suite 350  
Saint Paul, MN 55101-2147

email: [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us)

web: [mn.gov/puc](http://mn.gov/puc)

tel: 651.296.0406

toll free: 1.800.657.3782

fax: 651.297.7073



# Cold Weather Rule



**Keep the Heat On - Reconnect Service**  
**October 15 - April 15**

## What is the Cold Weather Rule?

It's the law in Minnesota, state statute 216B.096

The Cold Weather Rule (CWR) helps keep your heat on from October 15 through April 15.

***Your gas or electric provider can turn off your heat during the winter - stay connected.***

You must make and keep a CWR payment plan with your natural gas or electric utility company to get CWR protection. As long as you make your payments, you are protected until April 15.

If you have a payment plan and you cannot make a payment as agreed on because your situation has changed make sure you contact your utility right away to request a change to the payment plan.

If your gas or electric service is disconnected, the utility must work to restore service within 24 hours once you agree to a payment plan

## Am I eligible?

CWR protection is only available to residential customers.

All natural gas and electric companies must offer CWR protection. If you use an alternate fuel and must have electric to power your furnace, you are eligible for CWR protection.

You are eligible for CWR protection if you agree to, and keep, a payment plan. Payment plans are based on household income.

Renters are eligible for CWR protection if the natural gas or electric service is in your name and disconnection affects your unit's heat.

## How do I sign up for the CWR?

Contact your electric or natural gas company to find out if you are eligible and to sign up for a CWR payment plan.

You can set up a CWR payment plan at any time during the CWR season. Contact your gas or electric company and ask for a CWR payment plan.

If you and your utility cannot agree on a payment amount, ask your natural gas or electric company for an appeal form or contact the MN PUC for assistance at 800-657-3782.

If you do not keep your CWR payment plan, the utility may disconnect your service.

## Do all utilities follow the Cold Weather Rule?

Yes. CWR laws apply to natural gas and electric utilities including municipal utilities and cooperatives.

No. Delivered fuels, such as fuel oil, propane and wood, are not covered by the CWR. Propane providers must offer budget or payment plans.

Electric service needed to run a furnace may be covered. If you need electricity to keep your heat on, you may apply for CWR protection with your electric company.

**What if I can't make my scheduled payment?** Contact your gas or electric company immediately to discuss a different payment plan. If you do not make your payments, your service may be shut off. You can also contact the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission for assistance at 800-657-3782.

**Cold Weather Rule payment plans end on April 15. You must contact your natural gas or electric company by April 15 to request to continue your payment plan.**