


# Claiming compensation



Has your electricity or gas provider caused you loss or damage? You may be able to claim compensation.

Utilities Disputes is here to help with questions or complaints about electricity, gas, water, or broadband installation on shared property. Our service is free, independent, and fair.

Your **retailer** is the electricity or gas provider who bills you for the energy you use. Your **distributor** is the electricity or gas provider who runs the local electricity or gas network, including electricity lines and gas pipes.

**Retailers and distributors?**

## What you may be able to claim for

Your retailer guarantees the supply of electricity or gas will be of acceptable quality under section 7A of the Consumer Guarantees Act 1993. If it's not, you may be able to claim from your retailer. Alternatively, you may be able to claim from your distributor if their negligence has caused you damage.

### 1 Property damage

Your property might be damaged by:

- high or low voltage or other supply problems
- the actions of an electricity or gas provider when inspecting or repairing equipment on your land.

You may be able to claim the cost of repairing or replacing the damaged property.

### 2 Lost business

Electricity and gas providers do not usually compensate you for lost business caused by supply problems. However, the Commissioner may be able to recommend the provider compensates you depending on the circumstances.

### 3 Outages

Frequent or long outages may cause you inconvenience or loss. For example, food in your fridge may spoil.

Some electricity distributors pay retailers a fixed amount when unplanned outages last more than a certain time. Retailers decide if consumers get all or part of this payment. Ask your retailer about the circumstances that could lead to a payment for an outage.

Distributors may need to turn the electricity off for different reasons. When distributors plan outages, they must tell you ahead of time. Distributors do not usually compensate consumers (including businesses) for planned outages.

## How to claim from the provider

Ask your electricity or gas provider to look at your claim. Tell the provider you are making a complaint.

Give the provider this information:

- a description of the damage or other losses
- evidence of the damage – keep damaged items or take photos, keep reports, quotes, and receipts
- the date, time, and description of what you saw during the event
- records of any contact you had with your insurer.

Energy contracts usually say providers cannot guarantee an uninterrupted supply. This does not mean you cannot claim compensation if you have suffered damage. If the provider decides not to pay, it should tell you why.

## How Utilities Disputes looks into claims

If you are not satisfied with the way the provider responds to your claim, you can ask Utilities Disputes to look into it. Contact us at any stage.

We can consider claims of up to \$50,000, and up to \$100,000 if the provider agrees. You can choose to limit your claim if you want us to consider it.

We may review information about what happened, the impact of the event on you, and any relevant law. We may ask an expert for technical or legal advice.

**Utilities Disputes resolves complaints about electricity, gas, water, and broadband installation on shared property.**



**Get in touch. Our service is free, independent, and fair.**

**☎ 0800 22 33 40**

**Email** info@utilitiesdisputes.co.nz

**Website** utilitiesdisputes.co.nz

**Post** PO Box 5875, Wellington 6140

**Freepost** 192682



**If your property is insured,** you should also contact your insurer for advice. The electricity or gas provider may have to compensate you even if you have insurance cover.

