

Disconnections



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.

When a provider may disconnect your energy supply for unpaid bills

A provider may disconnect your energy supply for unpaid bills if it gives you notice.

However, disconnection for non-payment should be a last resort measure, after a provider has attempted to work with you to resolve any payment difficulties.

If you are having trouble paying your bills, tell your provider as soon as possible so they can help.

The provider may charge you fees for disconnection and reconnection.

Your energy supply can stop for reasons other than an unpaid bill, such as safety or an outage on the network. If your power is off, check with your provider.



Before disconnecting, the provider should:

- make at least five attempts to contact you or your chosen contact, including three attempts via your preferred communication channel
- complete at least one traceable form of contact such as visiting the property, sending a message with a read receipt, or sending a courier letter requiring a signature
- make all reasonable efforts to help you stay connected
- send a final notice of disconnection when the original invoice becomes 44 or more days overdue. The final notice of disconnection should be issued at least 24 hours before the disconnection
- say on the notice the timeframe when the disconnection will take place and how you can avoid disconnection.

Medically dependent and vulnerable consumers



If you depend on electricity for critical medical support, or you are vulnerable because of your age, disability, financial situation, or health, tell your provider.

Your provider may be able to offer other ways you can pay your bill, such as paying a set amount each week or month.

The disconnection process

Providers must give you notice before disconnecting and should follow the process set out in the Consumer Care Guidelines¹. This includes providing you assistance to overcome any payment difficulties and giving you reasonable time to pay or agree to a payment plan.

¹ For more information about the Consumer Care Guidelines produced by the Electricity Authority see our website: https://www.utilitiesdisputes.co.nz/UD/Resources/Helpful_Information.aspx

When a provider should not disconnect

The provider should not disconnect when:

- you or someone in your household is medically dependent on electricity
- the provider or Utilities Disputes is looking into a complaint about the unpaid bills
- the provider has not sent the bill
- the bill is an estimate, unless the provider believes the estimate is reasonable
- the debt does not relate to energy supply (e.g., it relates to unpaid broadband services).

The provider should only disconnect on a working day that is not a Friday or the day before a public holiday.

What you can do

- Sort out problems early. After disconnection, your provider may require you to pay a lump sum to reconnect
- Ask your provider about payment plans and check you are on the best price plan available
- If you have complained about a bill, pay a reasonable amount towards the bill and keep paying your current bills
- If you are often at risk of disconnection, think about switching to prepay electricity to save on fees and lost discounts.

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



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

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We may be able to help if the provider sent you a disconnection notice, disconnected your supply, or if you have a complaint.

We can:

- help you and the provider talk about the situation
- call the provider to check what your options are
- check the provider has given you enough notice.

We cannot make the provider stop the disconnection.

