

MINNESOTA COLD WEATHER RULE: Notice of Residential Customer Rights & Possible Assistance
IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING WINTER UTILITY BILLS

THE COLD WEATHER RULE **DOES NOT** FORBID WINTER ELECTRIC SHUTOFF

This notice informs you of your rights and responsibilities under the Cold Weather Rule and designed to help you with high winter electric bills. **You must act PROMPTLY.** If you choose not to assert your rights or choose not to enter a mutually acceptable payment plan, **your service may be disconnected.**

An electric utility must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 1 and April 30 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit **and ALL** of the following conditions are met:

- The household income of the customer is at or below 50% of the state median household income. Income may be verified on forms provided by the local energy assistance provider. A customer meets the income requirement if the customer receives energy assistance or other type of public assistance that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50% of the state median household income; and
- A customer enters and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household; and
- A customer receives from the utility referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customers' energy bills.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

THE RIGHT to request and complete the Cold Weather Disconnect Protection Form. If you do so, and if your household income is less than 50% of state median income, the service affecting your primary heat source cannot be disconnected for nonpayment of your bill. However, we have the right to accept or reject your request based on information supplied or other supporting documentation.

THE RESPONSIBILITY if you choose to complete the Cold Weather Disconnect Protection Form you must return it to use **prior to the disconnect date.** You must contact us immediately to arrange a payment plan.

THE RIGHT to a mutually agreeable payment schedule with us. The schedule will cover your existing arrears plus the estimated usage during the payment schedule period.

THE RIGHT not to be involuntarily disconnected on a Friday or day before a holiday, or until at least twenty (20) days after the postmark on the notice to disconnect or until fifteen (15) days after the notice and information has been personally delivered.

THE RIGHT not to be disconnected until the utility investigates whether the residential unit is actually occupied when a customer does not respond to a disconnection notice. If the unit is found to be occupied, the utility must immediately inform the occupant of the provisions of this section. 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.

THE RIGHT to appeal the disconnection of service to the Springfield Public Utilities Commission Board. If you choose to appeal, you must deliver or mail a personal letter stating your situation and issues in dispute. Your letter must be in our hands before the date of disconnection. No disconnection of service will take place during the appeal process.

If you do not meet ALL the conditions of the Cold Weather Rule as outlined, you do not qualify for winter shutoff protection. However, you can still continue to receive electric service if you call us to set up a mutually acceptable payment arrangement. Call the City of Springfield **BEFORE** the disconnect date.

UTILITY PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR MILITARY SERVICE PERSONNEL

- When a household member has been ordered into active duty, for deployment, or for a change of duty station, some customers may find it hard to pay their utility bills. Minnesota law protects these military personnel from shutoff if they cannot pay their utility bills in full.

ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROVIDES: Brown County Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC): 1-507-508-4041

THE COLD WEATHER RULE DOES NOT FORBID WINTER ELECTRIC SHUTOFFS. TO MAKE A PAYMENT PLAN CALL CITY HALL AT 507-723-3500.