



Small-scale energy networks life support factsheet



Information for small-scale energy networks residential customers using life support equipment

Life support equipment

A person may require life support equipment in their place of residence for their ongoing health, safety and wellbeing. Gas and electricity retailers and distributors have obligations to protect life support customers.

A life support customer is a residential customer who is a registered user of a life support system with the retailer or distributor, or a residential customer who resides at a supply address with a person who is a registered user of a life support system.

Life support system is any of the following:

- ▶ an oxygen concentrator
- ▶ an intermittent peritoneal dialysis machine
- ▶ a chronic positive airways pressure respirator
- ▶ medically required heating or cooling (a customer must be eligible for the medical heating and cooling concession to be a life support person for this system)
- ▶ a nebuliser
- ▶ a kidney dialysis machine
- ▶ a ventilator for life support
- ▶ other equipment as advised by the Commission.

Notice to the retailer or distributor

A retailer or distributor must be notified that a person is using life support equipment before they are bound by any life support obligations.

A retailer or distributor can accept notice that a person requires life support equipment from any of the following people:

- ▶ the customer who is using the life support equipment or living with a person using life support equipment
- ▶ a medical practitioner
- ▶ a close relative or carer of the person using the life support equipment
- ▶ a person who has a legal power of attorney or guardianship over the person using life support equipment

Notice can be provided over the phone, in writing, or by email.

Retailer and distributor obligations

An energy retailer or distributor is obliged to do the following for life support customers upon being notified:

- ▶ register the supply address as a life support system address and the date from which a life support system is required on a life support register developed and maintained by the retailer or distributor
- ▶ provide the customer with a faults and emergencies telephone contact number, and
- ▶ not arrange for the disconnection of the supply address for non-payment.

Medical confirmation

A retailer or distributor requires medical confirmation after receiving notice that life support

equipment is being used. If medical confirmation is not received, the retailer or distributor is not bound by the life support obligations.

Medical confirmation must be provided to the retailer or distributor within **50 business days** after the initial notice was provided.

A retailer or distributor can give an additional **25 business days** to provide medical documentation, upon request.

The medical confirmation must come from a medical practitioner and must confirm:

- ▶ the type(s) of life support systems required
- ▶ the life support customer's address, and
- ▶ the date from which the customer requires supply of electricity or gas for the purposes of the life support system.

A medical practitioner is a person currently registered under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law* to practise in the medical profession and is not a student.

Customer obligations - planning for energy supply interruptions

It is important to recognise that registering as a life support customer does not guarantee continuous 24-hour energy supply to the premises. Energy retailers or distributors may need to interrupt supply for critical maintenance or upgrade to manage the safety and reliability of the network, or supply could be affected by an unplanned outage. Customers will be provided with at least four business days' notice for planned interruptions.

It is important for life support customers to develop an emergency management plan in discussion with their doctor or medical service provider to help deal with a planned or unplanned interruptions to energy supply.

Completion of a retailer or distributor's life support obligations

Life support obligations on retailers and distributors continue indefinitely, until one of the following occurs:

- ▶ the life support customer no longer requires the use of the life support system
- ▶ the life support customer switches to another retailer and distributor, or
- ▶ the life support customer moves to another address.

A retailer or distributor can ask the customer to inform them if the life support customer leaves their address or no longer requires the life support system.

A retailer or distributor may rely on written advice received from a medical practitioner or hospital that a life support system is no longer required.

If a life support customer switches to another retailer and distributor, the new retailer and distributor will need to be separately informed that the customer is a life support customer, and appropriate documentation will need to be provided to the new retailer and distributor.

If the life support customer moves to a new supply address, their retailer and distributor will need to be informed of this move, and the retailer and distributor must update the life support register with the new address.

Disclaimer

This factsheet is intended as a summary of the rights available to small-scale energy residential customers who are life support customers. To determine the specific obligations of retailers and distributors, customers should refer to the relevant Small-scale Gas Networks Code or Small-scale Electricity Networks Code available on the [Commission's website](http://www.escosa.sa.gov.au).

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Essential Services Commission
GPO Box 2605 ADELAIDE SA 5001

Telephone: (08) 8463 4444 E-mail: escosa@escosa.sa.gov.au Web: www.escosa.sa.gov.au

