



Small-scale energy networks disconnection and reconnection factsheet



Information for small-scale network customers on disconnection and reconnection of supply

Disconnection of a customer

When a customer instructs their retailer to disconnect their address, the retailer must use their best efforts to arrange the disconnection.

A retailer may arrange for a customer to be disconnected, if a customer:

- ▶ has not paid their bill
- ▶ has not agreed to a reasonable offer of an instalment plan or other payment option to pay an outstanding bill
- ▶ has not made payments under an agreed instalment plan or other payment option to pay an outstanding bill
- ▶ has not allowed access to the property to read the meter, for either three consecutive billing cycles or for a longer period as nominated by the retailer, or
- ▶ has not paid a security deposit or provided a bank guarantee, if a deposit / guarantee is required.

Obligations prior to disconnection of customers

When a customer has not met their obligations and a retailer is seeking to disconnect a customer, the retailer must first:

- ▶ use their best efforts to contact the customer by phone, mail, email, or any other method approved by the Commission
- ▶ give the customer a reminder notice, and

- ▶ after the expiry of the reminder notice, give the customer a written disconnection warning with five business days' notice of the disconnection.

Where a residential customer has not paid their bill, a retailer must first offer the residential customer alternative payment options before seeking disconnection.

Where a customer has not allowed access to the property for a meter reading, a retailer must first give the customer the opportunity to provide access before disconnection.

After a retailer has fulfilled their obligations prior to disconnection, and the customer and retailer cannot come to a solution, a retailer may then disconnect the customer.

Reconnection after disconnection

If a customer has been disconnected and has corrected the reason for the disconnection (for example, paid an outstanding bill), a retailer must use their best efforts to reconnect the customer.

A reconnection fee may apply, and the customer must agree to and pay this fee to be reconnected.

Reconnections can only happen before 4:00pm on a business day.

A retailer must use their best efforts to reconnect a customer on the same day as their reconnection request. If a retailer cannot reconnect the customer on the same day as their reconnection request, the customer must be connected on the next business day.

A retailer may offer an after-hours reconnection; however, a retailer may not be able to connect after-hours. If the retailer can proceed with an after-hours reconnection, a fee may apply.

An after-hours reconnection will only be available if specifically requested and the reconnection is scheduled after 4:00pm but before 9:00pm on a business day.

If an after-hours reconnection request cannot proceed, the retailer must arrange for connection by the end of the next business day and the additional after-hours fee will not apply.

Any reconnection requests made after 9:00pm on a business day will require a retailer to reconnect the address by the end of the next business day.

Disconnections for emergencies

At times it may be necessary for a customer's energy to be disconnected due to safety concerns or an emergency.

Where a retailer must disconnect due to an emergency, they must:

- ▶ provide a 24-hour emergency phone line
- ▶ provide information on the nature of the emergency
- ▶ provide an estimate of the time when supply will be restored, and
- ▶ use their best efforts to restore supply as soon as possible.

Disconnections for safety

In certain conditions, an energy connection to a customer's property may present a risk of fire, electrocution, or other danger. Where the legislation, regulations, or codes require a disconnection for safety reasons, a retailer must not disconnect a customer unless the retailer has:

- ▶ given the customer written notice of the reason for disconnection, and
- ▶ allowed the customer five business days to remove or resolve the issue.

If the customer has not corrected or resolved the issue after five business days, a retailer will give a written disconnection warning to the customer, allowing a further five days' notice of the disconnection.

If the issue has not been resolved by the end of the disconnection warning, the customer will be disconnected.

Interruptions for planned network maintenance, extension or expansion

At times it may be necessary to curtail or interrupt energy supply to enable planned network maintenance, extension or expansion. In this case, the distributor must:

- ▶ provide affected customers with at least four business days' notice
- ▶ provide information about the date, time, expected duration and reason for the supply interruption, and
- ▶ provide a 24-hour telephone service, where the duration of the interruption will be longer than 15 minutes.

When a retailer may not disconnect

There are certain, limited circumstances when a retailer must not disconnect a customer (or specific classes of customers). These circumstances are:

- ▶ before 8:00am or after 3:00pm on a business day
- ▶ any time on a Friday, a weekend, on a public holiday, the day before a public holiday, or on the days between 20 December and 31 December (inclusive), except in the case of a planned interruption
- ▶ where a customer is being disconnected due to non-payment of a bill, the retailer must not disconnect if the amount outstanding is less than the disconnection threshold AND the customer has agreed to pay the outstanding amount owing
- ▶ where a residential customer, or person, living at the supply address is dependent on a life support system

- ▶ where the retailer is aware that a customer has applied for a rebate, concession, or relief available under any government funded scheme and a decision on the application has not been made, and
- ▶ where a customer has made a complaint, that complaint directly relates to the reason for the disconnection, AND the complaint remains unresolved or there is an ongoing review.

A retailer must also consider any extreme weather conditions impacting the supply address and whether disconnecting supply would in any way immediately endanger the health or safety of anybody living at the supply address.

Disclaimer

This factsheet is intended as a summary of the rights available to customers who are small-scale energy 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](#).

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