



# Notification of Rights and Responsibilities under Minnesota Cold Weather Rule

This booklet explains the Cold Weather Rule and the steps to take if you cannot pay your bill or your electric service is disconnected.

The Cold Weather Rule does not forbid all winter disconnections. If you receive a Notice of Proposed Disconnection this winter, you must act promptly.

Call Otter Tail Power Company at 800-257-4044 to sign up for Cold Weather Rule Protection.

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## The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule

Some customers find it hard to pay their heating bills in the winter. The State of Minnesota set up the Cold Weather Rule to protect residential customers from disconnection if they cannot pay their bills in full. This protection lasts from October 15 through April 15. You may qualify for this protection if you meet both of the following conditions:

1. The disconnections would affect your main heating source.
2. You and Otter Tail Power Company agree to a payment plan.

**If you receive energy assistance, you are eligible for Cold Weather Rule protection.**

## Avoiding disconnection

If you receive a notice of proposed disconnection this winter, you must call Otter Tail Power Company at 800-257-4044 immediately to apply for Cold Weather Rule Protection and set up a payment plan.

Your service will be subject to disconnection without further notice if you do not make the agreed upon payments. If you cannot keep your original payment plan, call Otter Tail Power Company immediately and make a new payment plan to avoid disconnection.

### **Becker County**

Becker County Human Services  
218-847-5628

Mahube Community Council, Inc.  
218-847-1385 or 888-458-1385

### **Beltrami County**

Beltrami County Human Services  
218-333-8300

Bi-County Community Action Programs, Inc.  
218-751-4631 or 800-332-7161

### **Big Stone County**

Prairie Five Community Action  
320-325-5227

Big Stone County Family Service Center  
320-839-2555

### **Cass County**

Cass County Social Services Office  
218-547-1340

Bi-County Community Action Programs, Inc.,  
218-751-4631 or 800-332-7161

### **Chippewa County**

Chippewa County Family Services  
320-269-6401

Prairie Five Community Action Council, Inc.  
320-269-6578 or 800-292-5437

### **Clay County**

West Central Community Action  
218-685-4486 or 800-492-4805

### **Clearwater County**

Clearwater County Dept. of Human Services  
218-694-6164

### **Douglas County**

West Central Community Action  
218-685-4486 or 800-492-4805

Douglas County Social Services Department  
320-762-2302

### **Grant County**

West Central Community Action  
218-685-4486 or 800-492-4805

Grant County Social Services  
218-685-4417

### **Hubbard County**

Mahube Community Council, Inc.  
218-847-1385 or 888-458-1385

### **Kandiyohi County**

Kandiyohi County Family Service  
Department, 320-231-7800

Heartland Community Action Agency  
800-992-1710 or 320-235-0850

### **Kittson County**

North West Community Action, Inc.  
218-528-3258 or 800-568-5329

Kittson County Welfare Department  
218-843-2689

### **Lac qui Parle County**

Prairie Five Community Action  
320-598-3027 or 800-292-5437

Lac qui Parle County Family Service Center  
320-598-7594

### **Leech Lake Indian Reservation**

Leech Lake Energy Assistance  
218-335-8337

### **Lincoln County**

Lincoln, Lyon, & Murray Human Services  
507-694-1452 or 800-657-3781

Western Community Action  
507-537-1416, or 800-658-2448

### **Lyon County**

Lincoln, Lyon, & Murray Human Services  
507-537-6747 or 800-657-3760

Western Community Action  
507-537-1416, or 800-658-2448

### **Mahnomen County**

Mahube Community Council, Inc.  
218-847-1385 or 888-458-1385

Mahnomen County Human Services  
218-935-2568

### **Marshall County**

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.  
218-281-9080 or 866-264-3729

Marshall County Residents  
(EXCEPT Middle River and Holt)  
218-745-5124 or 218-745-5125

North West Community Action, Inc.  
218-528-3258 or 800-568-5328

### **Norman County**

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.  
218-281-9080 or 866-264-3729

Norman County Social Services  
218-784-5400

### **Otter Tail County**

Otter Tail County Social Services  
Energy Assistance Program  
218-998-8230 or 800-450-2310

### **Pennington County**

Inter-County Community Council  
218-796-5144

Pennington County Social Services  
218-681-2880

### **Polk County**

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.  
218-281-9080 or 866-264-3729

Inter-County Community Council  
218-796-5144

Polk County Social Service Center  
218-281-3127

### **Pope County**

West Central Community Action  
218-685-4486 or 800-492-4805

Pope County Family Services  
320-634-5750

### **Red Lake County**

Inter-County Community Council  
218-796-5144

Red Lake County Social Service Center  
218-253-4131

### **Redwood County**

Western Community Action  
507-537-1416 or 800-658-2448

Redwood County Human Services  
507-637-4050

### **Roseau County**

Roseau County Social Service Center  
218-463-2411

Northwest Community Action, Inc.  
218-528-3258 or 800-568-5329

### **Stevens County**

Stevens County Social Services Department  
320-589-7400

West Central Community Action  
218-685-4486 or 800-492-4805

### **Swift County**

Prairie Five Community Action  
320-842-8565

Swift County Welfare & Family Service  
Agency, 320-843-3160

### **Todd County**

Todd County Social Services  
320-732-4516

### **Traverse County**

Traverse County Family Service Department  
320-563-8255

West Central Community Action  
218-685-4486 or 800-492-4805

### **Wadena County**

Otter Tail-Wadena Community Action  
218-385-2900 or 800-450-2900

### **White Earth Indian Reservation**

White Earth Reservation Tribal Council  
218-983-3285 or 800-726-4016

### **Wilkin County**

West Central Community Action  
218-685-4486 or 800-492-4805

Wilkin County Family Service Agency  
218-643-7161

### **Yellow Medicine County**

Family Service Center, 320-564-2211

Prairie Five Community Action  
507-223-5471

## Reconnection

If your power is disconnected on October 15 when the Cold Weather Rule takes affect, you can have your power reconnected by calling Otter Tail Power Company at to set up a payment plan. If you cannot keep your original payment plan, call Otter Tail Power Company immediately and make a new payment plan to avoid disconnection.

For more information, call Otter Tail Power Company at 800-257-4044.

## Proposed disconnection

If you receive a Notice of Proposed Disconnection, you also will receive the following:

1. Information about your rights and responsibilities
2. Information about ways to reduce energy use
3. A list of agencies that help pay utility bills
4. A list of weatherization providers

## Cold Weather Rule Payment Plan

If you have received a Notice of Proposed Disconnection you might qualify for a payment plan.

### Payment plan

You have the right to a payment plan during the cold-weather months. This payment plan must be agreeable to you and to Otter Tail Power Company.

If your household income is:

- At or below 50 percent of the state median income, you are not required to pay more than 10 percent of your monthly household income.
- More than 50 percent of the state median income, you may make a payment plan with Otter Tail Power Company.

Most Cold Weather Rule payment plans last until April 15 unless you make other arrangements with Otter Tail Power Company. Your service could be disconnected if you have a past-due balance on April 15 and do not make and keep a new payment plan.

If you and Otter Tail Power Company cannot agree on a payment plan, you have ten days to appeal to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC). The MPUC will help you set up a payment plan, and your service will stay on during the appeal process.

If you and Otter Tail Power Company agree on a payment plan and you continue to make your payments, Otter Tail Power Company will not disconnect your service.

You may qualify for our Even Monthly Payment (EMP) plan that averages your billing over 12 months.

## Third-party notice

Otter Tail Power Company offers all customers the opportunity to have a third party notified if their electric service is about to be discontinued. This program can be especially helpful for the ill, senior citizens, those who live alone, and customers who do not read English. The purpose of this program is to notify a third party, as well as the customer, that a Notice of Proposed Disconnection has been sent.

A third party could be a friend, relative, church, or community agency. The third party receives copies of all disconnection notices Otter Tail Power Company mails to the customer but is NOT required to pay the bills. The third party is authorized to exchange information about the customer and make a payment plan with Otter Tail Power Company on the customer's behalf. This helps avoid the hardship that would result from disconnecting the customer's service.

If you want to name a third party, please fill out the Third-Party Notice form and return it to Otter Tail Power Company.

## Request for third-party notice

(Please print)

Customer's name		
Address		Phone
City	State	ZIP
Account number from statement		
I agree that Otter Tail Power Company may exchange information about my account with the person named below.		
Customer signature		Date
Name of third party to be notified		
Address		Phone
City	State	ZIP
Third-party signature		Date

(This request must include the third party's signature.)

Otter Tail Power Company will send a copy of any Notice of Proposed Disconnection on the above account to the named third party at the address listed. Otter Tail Power Company assumes no liability for failure of the third party to receive or act upon the notice. Complete this form, detach it, and mail it to your local Otter Tail Power Company office.

### Low-cost/no-cost energy tips

These simple practices can save you from 5 percent to 10 percent on your yearly utility bill. In most cases, all they will cost you is a little time.

#### Low-cost improvements

- Use compact fluorescent lightbulbs wherever possible.
- Caulk and weather strip attic and basement spaces, fireplaces, wall outlets, pipes, and ducts to reduce leakage of conditioned air.
- Cover windows with plastic.
- Install an insulated wrap on an electric water heater when it's located in an unheated area.
- Reduce water use in showers and at faucets by installing flow restrictors.
- Have your heating and cooling systems serviced once a year to ensure peak operational efficiency.
- Clean or replace heating and cooling filters once a month or as needed.

### No-cost improvements

- Reduce your water heater temperature setting to 120 degrees. With a dishwasher set it at 140 degrees.
- Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable in the winter and as high as is comfortable in the summer. Each degree above 68 degrees F. in the winter can add 3 percent to heating costs. Each degree above 72 degrees F. in the summer can lower cooling costs by 3 percent.
- Turn off lights.
- Turn off TVs, peripheral equipment such as VCR, DVD, and gaming sets when not in use.
- Turn off all unused appliances.
- Clean the lint filter after each dryer load. Set the dryer controls to prevent overdrying clothes.
- Close windows tightly and use locks to help prevent cold air from leaking in.