



Notification of Rights and Responsibilities under Minnesota Cold Weather Rule

This brochure 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 or 218-739-8877 to sign up for Cold Weather Rule Protection.

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 disconnection 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 or 218-739-8877 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 or 866-454-5628

Mahube-Otwa Community
Action Partnership, Inc.
218-847-1385 or 888-458-1385

White Earth Energy Assistance
218-473-2711 or 866-885-7656

White Earth Reservation Tribal Council
218-983-3285 or 800-950-3248

Beltrami County

Beltrami County Human Services
218-333-8300

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

Leech Lake Energy Assistance
218-335-3783 or 866-864-8668

Big Stone County

Prairie Five Community Action
320-839-2111

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 or 877-450-6401

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 or 800-245-6064

Inter-County Community Council
218-796-5144 or 888-778-4008

White Earth Energy Assistance
218-473-2711 or 866-885-7656

White Earth Reservation Tribal Council
218-983-3285 or 800-950-3248

Douglas County

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

Douglas County Social Services Department
320-762-2302 or 844-204-0012

Grant County

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

Grant County Social Services
218-685-8200

Hubbard County

Mahube-Otwa Community Action Partnership, Inc.
218-732-7204 or 888-458-1385

Kandiyohi County

Kandiyohi County Family Service
Department, 320-231-7800 or 877-464-7800

United Community Action
800-992-1710 or 320-235-0850

Kittson County

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

Kittson County Social Services
218-843-2689 or 800-672-8026

Lac qui Parle County

Prairie Five Community Action
320-598-3027

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

Leech Lake Indian Reservation

Leech Lake Energy Assistance
218-335-3783 or 866-864-8668

Lincoln County

Southwest Health and Human Services
507-694-1452 or 800-657-3781

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

Lyon County

Southwest Health and Human Services
507-537-6747 or 800-657-3760

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

Mahnomen County

Mahube-Otwa Community
Action Partnership, Inc.
218-935-5022 or 888-458-1385

Mahnomen County Human Services
218-935-2568

White Earth Energy Assistance
218-473-2711 or 866-885-7656

White Earth Reservation Tribal Council
218-983-3285 or 800-950-3248

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

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

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

Norman County

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

Norman County Social Services
218-784-5400

Otter Tail County

Mahube-Otwa Community
Action Partnership, Inc.
218-739-3011 or 888-458-1385

Otter Tail County Human Services
218-998-8230

Pennington County

Inter-County Community Council
218-796-5144 or 888-778-4008

Pennington County Social Services
218-681-2880

Polk County

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

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Inter-County Community Council
218-796-5144 or 888-778-4008

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
320-634-7755

Red Lake County

Inter-County Community Council
218-796-5144 or 888-778-4008

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 or 866-255-2932

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

Stevens County

Stevens County Social Services Department
320-208-6600

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
320-422-7777

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

Wadena County

Mahube-Otwa Community
Action Partnership, Inc.
218-632-3600 or 888-458-1385

White Earth Indian Reservation

White Earth Reservation Tribal Council
218-983-3285 or 800-950-3248

White Earth Energy Assistance
218-473-2711 or 866-885-7656

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 has been disconnected and the Cold Weather Rules are in effect, you can have your power reconnected by calling Otter Tail Power Company at 800-257-4044 or 218-739-8877 during regular business hours 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 or 218-739-8877.

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

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 working 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 member, 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 5 percent to 10 percent on your annual utility bill. In most cases, all they 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 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 when not in use.
- 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.