

Cold Weather Rule - November 1 thru March 31

What does the Cold Weather Rule mean for you?

The Cold Weather Rule helps to ensure you will have electric, gas, and water service for your home during the winter. **You must make pay arrangements with your utility to use the Rule.**

How do you sign up?

If you can't pay your entire bill, call your utility company to make pay arrangements:

- Agree to pay 1/12 of the overdue amount of your bill, plus 1/12 of your current bill, all disconnection and connection fees, and agree to pay the remainder in equal payments over the next 11 months; or
- Negotiate a payment plan to pay the overdue amount off quicker than 12 months.

Remember, you must also pay your full bills for new service you use while paying off the overdue amount.

Apply for federal, state, local or special funds for which you are eligible.

If you are behind in a previous payment plan and cannot catch up, you need to make a new payment agreement with the utility.

If you have illegally used service, you must pay for the value of the illegally used service.

What will the utility company do?

Utilities must inform you of the Cold Weather Rule payment plan as well as other available payment plans. Remember, under the Cold Weather Rule, you always have the option of spreading your payment over a total of 12 months.

Utilities must send written notice to customers 10 days before disconnection, plus attempt a phone call or personal contact the day before.

Utilities must tell customers about agencies that have funds to help pay utility bills.

Can you be disconnected during the Cold Weather Rule?

A utility can't disconnect you when the temperature is forecasted to drop below 35 degrees or be in the mid to low 30s over the next 24 hours, except in certain circumstances.

To prevent disconnection when it is 35 degrees or above, or to be reconnected regardless of temperature, you must make pay arrangements with your utility.

A utility may start the final notification and disconnection process if there is a 48 hour forecast of temperatures above 35 degrees.

On the day before disconnection, a utility must attempt to contact you by phone. If that fails, they must go to the home and notify you or leave a message on the door. Some utilities have a third party notification plan.

If the 48 hour forecast changes before the period ends and there is a forecast of below 35 degrees, the utility cannot disconnect until there is another Cold Weather Rule 48 hour forecast of temperatures above 35 degrees.