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Cold Weather Rule goes into effect Oct. 1, offers protection for eligible customers from service disconnection

Duluth, Minn. — Minnesota Power reminds residential customers who may have difficulty paying their energy bills this winter that help is available. In addition to payment plans offered by Minnesota Power, customers also may benefit from the Cold Weather Rule and be eligible for Energy Assistance Program dollars.

“We know some of our customers are facing challenging financial times and we’re here to help provide options for managing their electric bills,” said Tina Koecher, director of Customer Experience Operations. “As the weather turns colder, we want to ensure customers avoid any interruption to their service, so it’s important to be aware of the state’s Cold Weather Rule, which protects eligible residential customers from service disconnection.”

Cold Weather Rule

Minnesota’s Cold Weather Rule is in place from Oct. 1 to April 30 each year. Legislation passed in 2021 lengthened the period by four weeks.

Under this state statute, eligible residential energy customers are protected from service disconnection during the Cold Weather Rule period if the disconnection would affect the customer’s primary heating source. **Customers must set up and keep a monthly payment plan with Minnesota Power to be protected.** The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule does not prevent winter shut-off if customers don’t commit to a payment plan and don’t make the agreed-to payments on time.

Any residential customer who receives a proposed shut-off notice during the winter should act promptly and contact Minnesota Power at (800) 228-4966 to set up a payment plan or for more information about available options and resources.

Minnesota Power payment assistance

If customers have a past-due balance on their bill or are struggling to keep up, they should contact Minnesota Power at 800-228-4966 to explore options and set up a payment plan to avoid disconnection.

Energy Assistance available

With winter just around the corner, the state’s Energy Assistance Program, or EAP, may benefit residential customers who need help paying their bill. With the new program year starting Oct. 1, 2022, energy assistance benefits will return to more typical amounts and be noticeably lower than last year for most households. Applications are generally processed in the order received, so customers are encouraged to apply as early as possible.

Visit www.mnpower.com/CustomerService/EnergyAssistance or call (800) 657-3710 for information. Minnesota Power encourages eligible residential customers to apply for Energy Assistance Program dollars or refer a family member or friend to these financial resources. Households that qualify for Energy Assistance also may be eligible to receive other benefits, including exemptions from some fees and weatherization and energy efficiency programs.



Other resources

Minnesota Power's CARE program (Customer Affordability of Residential Electricity), www.mnpower.com/customerservice/careprogram is a discount program that may help. Customers can find out if they are eligible for a reduced electric bill through CARE by visiting mnpower.com/care. In addition, the Salvation Army HeatShare program is a resource available for customers who are unable to pay their energy bills or make heating-related repairs. It is also a way for customers to spread the warmth by donating at www.mnpower.com/HeatShare.

Watch for scammers

Customers also are reminded to be aware of scam phone calls that threaten power shutoffs. Minnesota Power does not call customers to demand immediate payment, and does not ask for credit or debit account numbers or threaten disconnection over the phone.

Any customers receiving such a call should not provide credit card numbers or their Minnesota Power account number. They should instead hang up and contact Minnesota Power at (800) 228-4966 if they have concerns. Customers also can report the calls and the numbers the calls came from to their local police department.

To learn more, go to www.mnpower.com/Alerts. To avoid any phone scam, the Federal Trade Commission recommends people ignore calls from toll-free numbers they are not familiar with and block them if possible.

Minnesota Power provides electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in Northeastern Minnesota, supporting comfort, security and quality of life for 145,000 customers, 14 municipalities and some of the largest industrial customers in the United States. More information can be found at www.mnpower.com.

The statements contained in this release, and statements that ALLETE may make orally in connection with this release that are not historical facts, are forward-looking statements. Actual results may differ materially from those projected in the forward-looking statements. These forward-looking statements involve risks and uncertainties and investors are directed to the risks discussed in documents filed by ALLETE with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

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