



AN ALLETE COMPANY

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Cold Weather Rule starts Oct. 1, protects eligible customers from disconnection

Other resources are available for customers struggling to keep up with electric bills

DULUTH, Minn. – Minnesota Power reminds residential customers that help is available for people who may have difficulty paying their electric bills this winter.

In addition to payment plans and programs or discounts offered by Minnesota Power, customers also may benefit from the Cold Weather Rule and be eligible for Energy Assistance Program dollars. Minnesota Power's new On Track program also is available to help customers pay down past-due balances through bill discounts and matching payments.

"We understand people can sometimes fall behind on bills, especially in this time of high fuel prices and other competing demands on limited household budgets. We have numerous resources that can help with both current bills and paying off past-due balances," said Tina Koecher, director of Customer Experience Operations. "As one example, with support from our acquisition partners, we have recently rolled out our On Track Program, which is meant to help residential customers who have a past-due balance. We know how essential our services are to homes in northeastern Minnesota, especially during the cold winter months. It is incredibly important that customers reach out to us so we can work with them to find options."

No matter the time of year, Minnesota Power urges customers who have a past-due balance on their bill or are struggling to keep up to contact the company at (800) 228-4966 to explore options and set up a payment plan to avoid disconnection. The company will work with customers to find a payment plan that best fits the financial circumstances of their household.

Cold Weather Rule

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule is in place from Oct. 1 to April 30 each year. Under this state statute, eligible residential energy customers are protected from service disconnection for these seven months, specifically 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. Residential customers whose service has been disconnected can also set up a payment plan to get reconnected under Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule.

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. The new program year is scheduled to start Oct. 1.

"On average, only about twenty percent of eligible customers in the state apply for energy assistance," said Koecher. "This is concerning because we know there is greater need out there. When people don't apply, it gives the impression that Minnesotans don't need those federal dollars and puts them at risk to be allocated to other states where need is more strongly demonstrated. With the uncertainty in funding that Energy Assistance Programs have faced recently, it is more important than ever that customers apply."

Minnesota Power encourages eligible residential customers to apply for the Energy Assistance Program or refer a family member or friend to these financial resources. Online applications are available at mn.gov/home. Paper applications can also be requested or printed from this website or through local agencies. To find your local agency, you can call (800) 657-3710. Apply early. Applications are generally processed in the order received. Households that qualify for Energy Assistance also may be eligible to receive other benefits, including relief from some fees, bill discounts and access to resources through weatherization and energy efficiency programs.

On Track Program

On Track is our new bill assistance option designed to help eligible residential customers with past-due balances through monthly bill support and matching payments. There are no income requirements to qualify, though dollars are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

The On Track Program offers eligible households a \$20 discount on monthly electric bills and a 100% dollar-for-dollar match by Minnesota Power on payments made toward past-due balances under a payment arrangement. [Click here](#) to learn more.

CARE Program

Minnesota Power's CARE program (Customer Affordability of Residential Electricity), is an income-based discount program to help people pay their current electric bills.

Customers can find out if they are eligible for a reduced electric bill through CARE by visiting mnpower.com/care.

Salvation Army HeatShare

The Salvation Army HeatShare program is 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 customer 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 to confirm status of their account and any potential action they may need to take.

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.

About Minnesota Power

Minnesota Power provides electric service within a 26,000-square-mile area in northeastern Minnesota, supporting comfort, security and quality of life for 150,000 customers, 14 municipalities and some of the largest industrial customers in the United States. More information can be found at www.mnpower.com.

About ALLETE, Inc.

ALLETE, Inc. is an energy company headquartered in Duluth, Minnesota. In addition to its electric utilities, Minnesota Power and Superior Water, Light and Power of Wisconsin, ALLETE owns ALLETE Clean Energy, based in Duluth, Minnesota; BNI Energy in Bismarck, North Dakota; and New Energy Equity, headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland; and has an 8% equity interest in the American Transmission Co. More information about ALLETE is available at www.allete.com. ALE-CORP

ALLETE calculates and reports carbon emissions based on the GHG Protocol. Details in ALLETE's [Corporate Sustainability Report](#).

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