Notice to Members who are behind in your bill payments

The Cold Weather Rule may not protect you!

Make plans now to pay your bill to avoid being without electricity this winter.

McLeod Cooperative Power regularly disconnects the electrical supply of members who do not pay for the electricity they use. While we dislike to have to disconnect members, it would not be fair to our other members if we allow certain members to use electricity for free while our other members pay.

The Cold Weather Rule was adopted to protect some people from having their primary source of electric heat disconnected between October 15 and April 15. However, this law doesn't mean there won't be disconnections. The law says that a person must be making regular payments or have set up a payment plan and be honoring those arrangements to avoid being disconnected. If you are behind in your payments and are counting on the Cold Weather Rule to protect you from making any payments during the winter, think again. McLeod Cooperative Power will be doing disconnects this winter in accordance with the law.

Please read the full Cold Weather Rule summary below. The list of agencies who can provide assistance to qualifying residents having trouble paying their bill is on this page and is also listed on the back of any electric bill with a delinquent balance.

It is up to the member to make payment arrangements or seek assistance to avoid disconnection. Please do not wait. The sooner you contact us, the greater the chance you will have electricity all winter long. Call today at 320-864-3148 or 1-800-494-6272 for details about applying for shut-off protection or to make a reasonable payment arrangement.

Cold Weather Rule Summary

The Cold Weather Rule, which is part of the Public Utilities Act, prohibits utilities from disconnecting a residential customer for nonpayment during the coldest months of the year if the customer has met the requirements under item 1 below. Your Cooperative strictly adheres to that law and offers sources of help for those unable to pay their bill. The law reads as follows:

1 An electric cooperative must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a home between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

- Your total household income is less than 50 percent of the State Median Income.
- You have contacted MCPA, have set up a payment arrangement, and are reasonably current with your scheduled payments.

If all of these items are not satisfied the electricity may be shut off due to non-payment.

2 Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during the cold weather months, the Cooperative will provide the following information to the customer:

- Notice of the proposed disconnection.
- A statement of the customer's rights and responsibilities.
- A list of local energy assistance providers.
- A statement explaining available time payment plans and other options to secure continued utility service.
- Inability to pay forms are available upon request.

3 Any residential customer whose service is disconnected on Oct. 15 may be reconnected if:

- The outstanding balance is paid.
- A mutually acceptable payment schedule is arranged.

Our members are important to McLeod Cooperative Power. We would rather work with you to set up a plan to pay your bill than disconnect your service.

4 The Cooperative will not disconnect service to a residential customer who has not responded to a disconnection notice without first investigating whether the dwelling is actually unoccupied. This investigation shall include a personal visit to the dwelling. If the unit is found to be occupied, the Cooperative will immediately inform the occupant of his or her rights under this policy.

5 If an involuntary disconnection is to occur between Oct. 15 and April 15, then the disconnection will not occur on a Friday or on the day before a holiday.

6 Any disputes over a residential customer's inability to pay for service, income eligibility, reasonableness of payment schedule or any other issue which a customer could raise under the Cold Weather Rule shall be referred for hearing, after reasonable notice, to the Cooperative's Board of Directors. The Cooperative and the customer shall have the right to present evidence and be heard in person at that hearing. The Cooperative's Board of Directors shall issue a written decision within 10 days after the hearing. No disconnection shall occur while a dispute is pending.

7 The Cooperative will notify all members, prior to Oct. 15, of its Cold Weather Rule. Names and contact numbers for energy assistance providers are listed on this page.

Attention military personnel

Minnesota law provides that a public utility must not disconnect the utility service of a residential member for nonpayment, that has been issued orders into active military duty, for deployment or for a permanent change in duty station, provided that they enter into an agreement with the utility to make payments towards their bill. Forms are available upon request.

Energy Assistance Providers

Kandiyohi, McLeod & Meeker Counties
United Community Action Partnership
PO Box 1359, 200 4th St. SW
Willmar, MN 56201
218 Main St. S., Suite 108,
Hutchinson MN 55350
Toll free: 800-992-1710
McLeod: 800-829-2132

McLeod County area
McLeod County Social Service Center
1805 Ford Avenue North
Glencoe, MN 55336
(320) 864-3144
(320) 484-4330 (Hutchinson Toll-Free)
1-800-247-1756 (Toll Free)

Renville County area
Renville County Energy Assistance Program
105 S. 5th Street, Suite 203H,
Olivia, MN 56277
320-523-2202
1-800-363-2533

Sibley County area
Sibley County Public Health & Human Services
111 8th Street
Gaylord, MN 55334
(507) 237-4000
1-866-396-9963

MN Valley Action Council
110 6th Street, P.O. Box 87
Gaylord, MN 55334
(507) 237-2981
706 N. Victory Dr.
Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 345-6822
1-800-767-7139 (Toll Free)

Carver County area
Scott-Carver-Dakota Community Action Agency
712 Canterbury Road South
Shakopee, MN 55379
(952)-496-2125

Wright County area
Wright County Community Action
130 West Division Street
Maple Lake, MN 55358
(320) 963-6500