

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING WINTER HEATING BILLS



**Nobles Cooperative
Electric**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Minnesota Cold Weather Rule

The Cold Weather Law does not forbid winter cutoffs. If you receive a disconnection notice this winter, you must act promptly.

The Cold Weather Law, Section 216B.097 of the Public Utilities Act, provides that from October 15 through April 15, electric utilities cannot disconnect a **residential** customer for nonpayment if the disconnection would affect your primary heat source and;

1. You declare an inability to pay, and
2. Your total household income is less than 50 percent of the state median income,
3. You have entered into a payment schedule and are current with your scheduled payments.

The purpose of this notice is to inform you of your rights and responsibilities under the Cold Weather Law. These rights and responsibilities are designed to help you meet winter utility bills. **You must act PROMPTLY!** If you choose not to assert your rights or choose not to enter into a mutually acceptable payment schedule, your service may be disconnected.

PO Box 788, Worthington, MN 56187-0788

Phone: 507-372-7331, 507-836-6107 or 800-776-0517

www.noblesce.coop

The Cold Weather Law Provides You with These Options

THE RIGHT to enter into a payment schedule with the utility to maintain your utility service. You have the right to appeal any proposed disconnection to your local utility. You will have to provide the utility proof that you are unable to pay. If you appeal a disconnection, your service will not be disconnected until the appeal is resolved. Appeals are resolved locally.

THE RESPONSIBILITY, to complete the Application for Winter Disconnect Protection form on the other side of this brochure and return it to the utility within 10 days. If you have proof that you are receiving any form of public assistance, you do not need to fill out the Application for Winter Disconnect Protection form. If you mail this form or can prove your receipt of public assistance, you must also contact the utility to arrange a payment plan.

THE RIGHT to a mutually acceptable payment schedule with the utility. This payment schedule will cover your existing arrears plus the estimated usage during the payment schedule period. If you are able to pay but still wish to enter into a payment schedule, contact the utility immediately to arrange a schedule. (This payment schedule may be arranged by your designated third party.)

THE RESPONSIBILITY of making payments as agreed or promptly notifying the utility why you cannot keep the agreement. You may then request that the original payment schedule be changed. Any change is initially subject to the utility's approval.

THE RIGHT to request that the utility notify a third party if your service becomes subject to disconnection. If you have requested third party notification, a copy of this notice has been sent to the third party.

THE RIGHT not to be involuntarily disconnected on a Friday or on a day before a holiday, or until at least 20 days after the postmark on the notice of disconnect or until seven working days after the notice and information has been personally delivered.

THE RIGHT not to be disconnected until the utility investigates whether the residential unit is actually occupied when a customer does not respond to a disconnection notice. If the unit is found to be occupied, the utility must immediately inform the occupant of the provisions of this section.

Read the notice of customer rights and possible assistance before completing this form.

COLD WEATHER DISCONNECTION FORM

Fill out completely (*please print*)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Phone: Cell _____

Home _____

Member No. (*from your bill*) _____

Total Amount Owing \$ _____

Annual Household Income \$ _____

No. of persons in household (*include yourself*) _____

- Medical emergency
- Disabled person in home
- I have already been approved for fuel assistance or emergency assistance from a local energy assistance agency based on my income

By signing this form, I hereby authorize any gas or electric utility that serves us to exchange billing information. I also authorize any energy assistance providers or human service agencies to exchange any income information to help determine income eligibility. I acknowledge that I have received, read and understand the Notice of Residential Customer Rights and Possible Assistance. I attest that the above information is true and correct.

Signature _____

Date _____

What to do if you meet the Cold Weather Law Conditions:

If you need help paying your gas or electric utility bills, you may qualify for state or federal fuel assistance. For complete qualifications and application information, contact your local county welfare or Community/Citizen's Action Council (CAC). These organizations may also provide budget counseling. Please call:

Nobles County Community Services - 507-295-5213

Southwest Health & Human Services - 507-836-6144

Southwest Minnesota Opportunity Council - 507-376-4195

United Community Action Partnership - 800-658-2448

The Salvation Army HeatShare - 800-842-7279

Minnesota Department of Energy Services - 800-657-3710

What to do if you don't meet the Cold Weather Law Conditions:

If you do not meet all the conditions of the Cold Weather Law as outlined in this brochure, you do not qualify for winter shutoff protection. However, you can still continue to receive electric service if you call us to set up a mutually acceptable payment arrangement. Call Nobles Cooperative Electric at 800-776-0517 **BEFORE** the due date.

Low Cost/No Cost Energy Efficiency Tips

- Weather strip and caulk windows and doors to keep warm air in and cold air out.
- Cover drafty windows with tightly sealed plastic.
- Open curtains and blinds on south-facing windows to let the sun in during the day to naturally heat your home.
- Seal air leaks to prevent cold air from entering through chimneys, vents, pipes and wires that penetrate walls, ceilings and attics.
- Close your fireplace damper when a fire is not in use to prevent warm air from escaping.
- Maintain your heating system. Have annual furnace or boiler inspections, clean or replace furnace filters regularly, and consider replacing old heating systems with more efficient Energy Star® models.
- Use a programmable thermostat. Set your thermostat to automatically turn down the heat at night and when nobody is home.



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