Cold Weather Law

Missouri's Cold Weather Law is designed to protect customers from having their electricity or natural gas disconnected during the winter months. Qualifying customers are placed on more lenient payment terms to help avoid possible disconnections.

The Cold weather law does not apply to municipally operated systems, cooperatives, or entities that provide propane by truck.

The Cold Weather Law:

- Is in effect from Nov. 1 to March 31
- Prohibits the disconnection of heat-related services on days when the National Weather Service predicts that the temperature will drop below 32 degrees Fahrenheit between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. in the next 72 hours.
- Requires the utility to make additional notifications prior to the discontinuance of service due non-payment.
- Requires you to be notified of possible financial help in paying your bill.
- Allows for reconnection of your service for less than the full amount owed.
- May allow you to extend your payment of preexisting debt across 12 months.
- In most cases, a deposit will not be assessed if you enter and keep a payment agreement
- Allows you to budget your payments across 12 months.
- Prohibits the disconnection of registered low-income elderly or disabled customers who make a required minimum payment. You may register with your utility if:
  - You are 65 years of age or older;
  - You file a form from your physician saying that your household must have electricity or natural gas to maintain life or health; or
  - You have a formal award letter from the federal government for disability benefits.

Additional Provisions for Natural Gas Customers:

The Cold Weather Law allows customers who defaulted on a previous Cold Weather Rule payment to make an initial payment of 50% of their outstanding balance, or $500, whichever is less. The remaining amount will be paid in a Cold Weather Law payment agreement over 12 months.

A gas utility will not be required to offer these more lenient payment terms more than once every two years or if a customer has defaulted on a Cold Weather payment plan three or more times. In those situations, customers would be required to pay 80% of the outstanding balance to keep their service or have service restored.

FAQ

Q: When is the Cold Weather Law in effect?

A: Nov. 1 through March 31

Q. What is the minimum payment a registered low-income elderly or disabled customer must make.

A. The customer must pay at least 50% of:

1. The actual bill for usage during that billing period; or
2. The level bill amount under their Cold Weather Law payment plan

Q: Who is considered a registered low-income elderly or disabled customer?

A: A customer who receives an income below 150% of the federal poverty guidelines and is registered with the utility company as an elderly or disabled customer.

Q: Is a customer required to pay the full amount owed to be reconnected if they broke a past Cold Weather Rule payment agreement?

A: No. If you are an electric company customer and break your payment agreement, the electric company will require an initial payment of up to 80 percent of your total balance. If you are a natural gas company customer, you may make an initial payment of 50%, or $500, whichever is less, and the remaining will be deferred to be paid in a Cold Weather Law payment agreement plan over 12 months.

** Programs like the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can assist you in paying heating bills. For more information, contact your local Community Action Agency.*

Missouri PSC Public Service Commission

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