



Energy & Water  
Ombudsman NSW

# Disconnections and restriction of supply

## What are the rules?

Prior to disconnecting your energy supply your provider must:

- send you a reminder notice
- send you a disconnection warning notice
- try to contact you after the disconnection notice is sent.

If your provider could not contact you, or if it contacted you but you did not agree to a payment arrangement, your provider can disconnect your supply.



**Your provider will only disconnect your electricity or gas supply as a last resort, and only after it has followed rules relating to disconnection.**



## What to do if your supply has been disconnected

If your supply has been disconnected, you need to contact your provider straight away and discuss what you need to do to get reconnected. Your provider may ask for a lump sum payment and/or commitment to a payment plan before it reconnects your supply. If you cannot afford to pay the amount required by your provider to be reconnected, you can call EWON.

## How to avoid disconnection

If your bill is overdue and/or you have received reminder notices, you should contact your provider immediately.

Speak openly with your provider about what you can afford to pay. You can either ask for an extension of time to pay or a formal payment plan. You should not agree to a payment plan that you can't afford. If your provider is not willing to offer you an affordable payment plan you can ask to speak to its affordability team (sometimes referred to as the 'hardship' team), or you can call us to make a complaint.

You may not want to discuss your financial circumstances with your energy provider, but it's important it is aware of your circumstances so it can offer the appropriate level of assistance.



**Make sure your provider has your current contact information so you can be notified of any risk of disconnection.**

## If you are having trouble affording your energy bills, talk to your provider

Your provider is required to offer you at least two payment plans in a twelve month period, if you ask. Your provider must consider how much you can afford to pay when offering you a payment plan.

All energy and water providers are also required to have affordability programs to assist you with flexible payment arrangements to help keep you connected.

Your provider should offer you further assistance if you:

- are having trouble paying your bill
- are getting help from a financial counsellor or other community worker
- have a history of late payments or requests for payment extensions
- have broken payment plans
- have received a disconnection warning notice
- have been disconnected for non-payment.



## Water restriction

The water account holder is always the person who owns the property, including tenanted properties. If you contact us to raise a complaint, we need to speak to the account holder to progress any complaints with the water provider.

Your water provider may restrict your supply if you have an unpaid bill. The notice requirements for restricting a customer's water supply are set out in the providers' Customer Contracts (the terms and conditions of supply to customers). Water providers normally issue a reminder notice following an unpaid bill, then a restriction notice if the bill remains unpaid. Your water provider may also make other attempts to contact you to discuss payment.

If you are facing water restriction or your water supply has already been restricted, contact your water provider and discuss what you can afford to pay for the supply to be restored. You may be able to arrange a payment plan or an extension of time to pay and can discuss any other available options.

If you're a tenant and your water supply has been restricted because of a dispute between your water provider and your landlord, you should contact the Tenants Union or Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service – [tenants.org.au](http://tenants.org.au)



**For health reasons your water provider cannot completely disconnect your supply, but will restrict the flow of water that you receive.**

## When is disconnection NOT allowed?

There are times when your provider cannot disconnect your electricity or gas supply even if you owe them money. These are:

- before 8am or after 3pm
- on a Friday, during the weekend, a public holiday or the day before a public holiday
- on or between 20 December and 1 January
- when you are making payments agreed to as part of a formal payment plan
- when you have a formal complaint with your provider or with us about the amount owing (either your provider or we will confirm with you that there is a hold on disconnection activity)
- for non-payment of arrears less than \$300 where you have agreed to repay that amount
- when you have arranged an appointment for Energy Account Payment Assistance (EAPA) (you need to advise your provider of the date, time and location of your appointment so they can place a hold on disconnection activity until that appointment)
- where the premises are registered as having life support equipment - electricity only (you must provide documentation from your doctor to confirm there is life support equipment at the premises).

## Getting reconnected

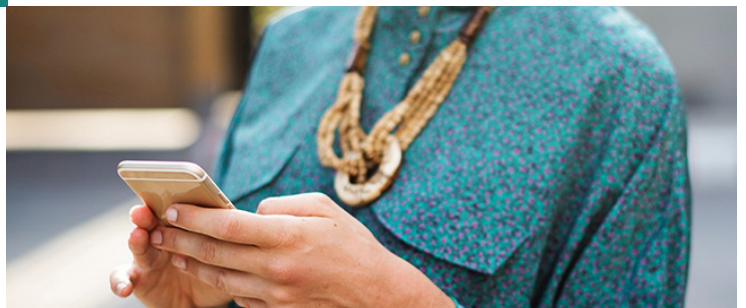
Once you agree to an arrangement, your provider will organise to have your supply to be reconnected. Electricity reconnections requested before 3pm may take place on that day or by 5pm on the next business day. If the reconnection is requested after 3pm, your supply must be reconnected no later than two full business days after the reconnection was requested. A person over the age of 18 may need to be at the premises for the reconnection.

Gas providers have a maximum of five business days to reconnect your gas supply.

### Disconnection and reconnection fees

If your provider has followed the disconnection rules you may be charged fees for disconnection or reconnection. Ask your provider about these fees. If you have any concerns about these fees you can call EWON for more information.

If you have a smart meter your provider can disconnect or reconnect your electricity supply remotely. This does not apply if your premises is part of an embedded network and your provider is an exempt seller.



## Make a complaint or enquiry

<b>Freecall</b>	1800 246 545* Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm
<b>Freepost</b>	Reply Paid 86550 Sydney South NSW 1234
<b>Interpreter</b>	131 450
<b>TTY/Voice</b>	133 677
<b>Online</b>	<a href="http://ewon.com.au">ewon.com.au</a>
<b>In person</b>	Level 11, 133 Castlereagh St, Sydney, NSW 2000

\* If you are calling from a mobile phone, let us know and we will call you back.