

Contact us:

- PO Box 202601
Helena MT 59620
- 1-800-646-6150
- www.psc.mt.gov
- pschelp@mt.gov

Winter Moratorium Explained

It is a common misconception that utility companies are not allowed to disconnect natural gas or electricity during the winter months. Another misconception is that having children in the home of any age protects against disconnect. These beliefs are not true. Under certain circumstances, regulated utilities **are** allowed to proceed with non-pay disconnects during the winter moratorium period, which runs from November 1 to April 1.

NorthWestern Energy, Montana-Dakota Utilities, Energy West, and other regulated utilities must obtain approval from the Public Service Commission before proceeding with non-pay disconnects on delinquent accounts during the winter moratorium period. The Commission will not approve a request for disconnect if the account holder has income at or below the federal poverty guideline, if the account holder is a recipient of a public assistance program, if a member of the customer's household is 62 years old or older, or if a member of the household is handicapped. It is the customer's responsibility to let the utility company know, prior to disconnect, if any of the above conditions exist in the home and they will likely be asked to provide documentation to the utility.

Companies not regulated by the Commission, such as cooperatives and propane distributors, are not required to obtain Commission approval prior to disconnecting utility service and have their own procedures to follow for winter terminations.

Customers are advised to contact their utility company to discuss their account. If the customer is not satisfied or has unanswered questions after talking to a regulated utility company they may contact the Public Service Commission at 1-800-646-6150.



Where to go for help with heating bills

Bill payment assistance may be available from the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) and from Energy Share of Montana.

Contact information for LIEAP and Energy Share of Montana is provided below:

BILLINGS District VII HRDC	(406) 247-4778
BOZEMAN District IX HRDC	(406) 587-4486 (800) 332-2796
BUTTE District XII Action Inc.	(406) 533-6855 (800) 382-1325
GREAT FALLS Opportunities Inc.	(406) 761-0310 (800) 326-0955
HAVRE District IV HRDC	(406) 265-6743 (800) 640-6743
HELENA Rocky Mountain Development Council	(406) 447-1625 (800) 356-6544
KALISPELL Community Action Partnership of NW MT	(406) 758-5433 (800) 344-5979
LEWISTOWN District VI HRDC	(406) 535-7488 (800) 766-3018
MALTA/GLASGOW Action for Eastern Montana	(406) 377-3564 (800) 227-0703
MISSOULA District XI HRDC	(406) 728-3710

Call 211 to find out about additional options.
211 call centers provide referrals and information regarding local resources.