

There are times when a retailer and distributor can disconnect your energy supply. Common examples include when you:

- do not pay a bill by the due date; or
- deny access to your meter.

Not paying a bill

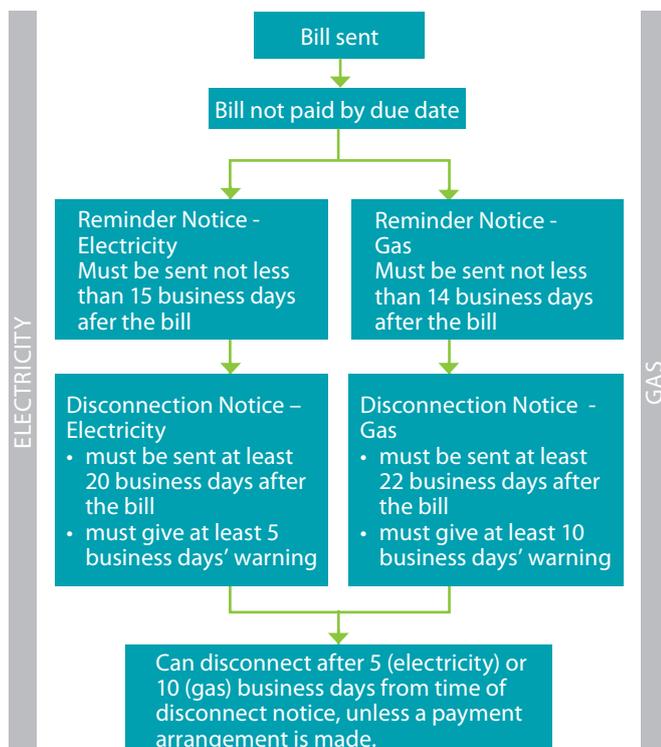
If you do not pay a bill by the due date, you may be disconnected.

Before disconnecting, a retailer must send you a reminder notice and a disconnection warning. The disconnection warning must:

- be sent at least 20 (electricity) or 22 (gas) business days after the bill was sent; and
- give you at least five (electricity) or 10 (gas) business days' warning.

Including the ordinary account time-to-pay period, a retailer cannot disconnect your supply within 26 (electricity) or 33 (gas) business days of sending the bill. The retailer should also try to contact you to warn you that you are about to be disconnected.

If an electricity retailer does not follow the required procedures, the disconnection will be considered 'wrongful' and you will be entitled to a service standard payment.



Not giving access to the meter

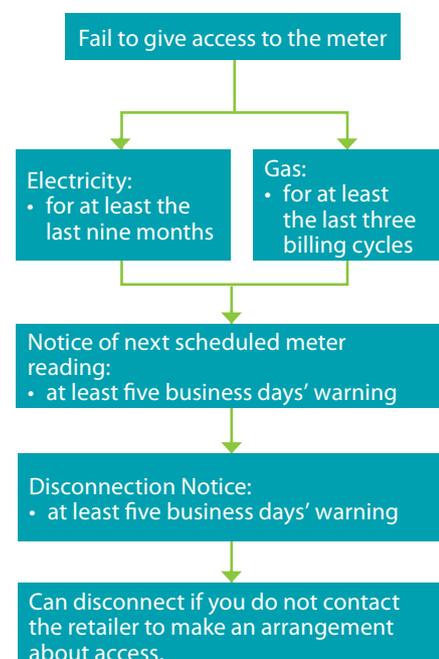
It is your responsibility to allow the distributor to go on to your property to read the meter. If this is not possible (for example, you have a dog or a locked gate), then you must let the retailer know and make an arrangement to read your own meter and provide the reading to your distributor.

If you do not provide access to your meter and do not make an arrangement with your retailer to read your own meter, you can be disconnected.

Electricity retailers can arrange disconnection if you have not given access to the meter for at least the past nine months.

Gas retailers can disconnect if you have failed to give access to the meter for at least three billing cycles in a row (that is, nine months if you get a bill every three months).

Before disconnecting you for failing to provide access to a meter, a retailer must give you five business days' written notice of the next scheduled meter reading date to allow you to provide access. For gas, a retailer must give this notice each time it was denied access to your meter. For electricity, a retailer must give this notice at least once after it was denied access to your meter. The retailer must then give you a disconnection notice with at least five business days' warning. The retailer should try to contact you to warn you that you may be disconnected if you do not provide access.



disconnections and reconnections

IMPORTANT!

If you are in financial hardship, you will not be disconnected if you contact your retailer before the due date and make arrangements to settle the debt. This could include setting up an instalment plan or seeking assistance through the Hardship Utility Grant Scheme HUGS.

When you cannot be disconnected

You may not be disconnected if:

- you have made an arrangement to pay a bill and you are making the required repayments;
- you have made a complaint directly related to the reason for the disconnection, and it is being investigated (for example, you have made a complaint about a bill); or
- someone living at your home uses life support equipment and you have registered this with your retailer.

Unless it is a planned interruption, distributors may not disconnect supply at certain times. For example you may not be disconnected:

- after 3pm Monday-Thursday;
- after 12noon on a Friday for electricity;
- anytime on a Friday for gas;
- during a weekend; or
- on a public holiday and the day before a public holiday (business day before a public holiday for electricity).

Reconnection

If you have been disconnected but the reason for the disconnection no longer exists (for example, you have paid the debt, arranged an instalment plan or provided access to the meter), you can request the retailer to reconnect your energy supply.

The retailer may require you to pay a fee for the reconnection. If you are unable to pay the fee, your retailer can offer to add the fee into an instalment plan.

When you request reconnection, the retailer must send the request to the distributor, who then reconnects your property.



Maximum timeframes for reconnection:

Reconnection timeframes	
electricity customers (metro)	within 2 business days
electricity customers (regional)	within 6 business days
gas customers (regardless of location)	within 3 business days (in some cases a longer timeframe may apply. For example, in an emergency or if you have requested a later reconnection date)

Electricity customers not reconnected within these timeframes are entitled to a service standard payment (see "complaints and service standards" for more information).

Who does this fact sheet apply to?

This fact sheet applies to small use customers. You are a small use customer if you use less than 160 MWh (about \$56,000) of electricity per year or up to 1TJ of gas per year (between \$28,500 and \$43,000, depending on where you live).