

## Topics in this issue

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## Policies & Procedures

### Credit from EAP-paid deposits

EAP funds used to pay a service deposit or a deposit for a fuel tank, etc. on behalf of a household may result in a credit back on the household’s energy vendor account, if the household moves or changes energy vendors. Service Providers and energy vendors are to apply the following procedures to EAP-paid deposits that become credits some time later:

**Same Program Year:**

If EAP funds for a deposit become a credit during the same program year, the credit is returned to EAP and is redistributed or obligated following the Refund Policy until December 15 of the subsequent program year.

**Prior Program Year:**

If EAP funds were used in a prior program year to pay a deposit and a credit is received after December 15, then the Refund Policy no longer applies and the credit is given to the household.

Rationale: It is EAP policy to use EAP funds first to pay energy bills. In general, a household’s payments to the vendor are presumed to have replaced EAP funds on the household’s Energy Vendor account for a deposit in a prior year.

## Answers to deferred questions from EAP Annual Training

SP Question	Commerce Response
<p><b>Assurance 16</b>                      Q: When describing how we plan to provide Proactive ESS classes (where we are not required to verify all class participants have been determined EAP eligible if the majority of the class participants are likely to be EAP eligible based on their participation in other low-income programs), can we work with households we served last year if we want to start up a Proactive activity early in the year?</p>	<p><b>Proactive ESS classes:</b> Based on program history, it can be reasonably assumed that a large majority of households served in FFY15 will apply and be eligible for EAP benefits in FFY16. As such, these households can be served for Proactive ESS early in the year.</p> <p><b>Individual Proactive ESS activities:</b> Service Providers must wait and determine the household’s eligibility for the relevant program year.</p>
<p><b>ERR Procurement</b>                      Q: Under “Commerce authorization” will there be a form or procedure to obtain that?</p>	<p>Follow your ERR procurement procedures, but if Commerce authorization is needed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Submit email to eap.mail describing why an exception to the Service Provider’s normal ERR procurement procedure is necessary.</li> <li>▪ Commerce will review and respond via email for authorization.</li> </ul>

SP Question	Commerce Response
<p><b>Crisis</b> Q: With the new required process about name on account matching a household member's name – in terms of Crisis timelines, how is that addressed?</p>	<p>The Service Provider should follow the process (as outlined in the <b>Name on Energy Accounts</b> section of Ch. 10 – <i>Apps &amp; App Processing</i>) to the extent possible. Given the constraints of the emergency, verify that the address on the account matches the households address at the very least and verify and document how it was verified.</p>
<p><b>Agent Orange</b> Q: How do you know it's Agent Orange? It came through as a VA Benefit?</p>	<p>Treat Veterans Benefits as income unless you know otherwise. VA can verify it. These types of benefits are rare and people receiving them are likely to know they are not countable as income for public benefits.</p>
<p><b>Rental Income &amp; Receipts</b> Q: When using rental receipts or cancelled checks to document rental income, how many months' worth does the household need to provide?</p>	<p>Three month of rental receipts or cancelled checks from the eligibility period are sufficient to document rental income for households whose only self-employment income is rental income and who do not deduct rental expenses.</p>
<p><b>Internal Controls Document</b> Q: We may need revisions or our initially submitted ICD. Does the Board Chair need to sign every revised ICD?</p>	<p>Yes the board chair should sign ICD revisions, should any occur.</p>

The following *A Spark* was sent to EAP Service Providers on August 19, 2015:



**FFY16 EAP Annual Training Turn Around Document (TAD)**

The attached Turn-Around-Document (TAD) includes Question & Answer sessions, full Power Point slide presentations, and copies of the training handouts. This TAD has also been posted on the [EAP Training](#) webpage.

Answers to some of the questions asked during the training Q&A sessions will be sent at a later date, after State staff discussion.

The following *A Spark* was sent to EAP Service Providers on August 21, 2015:



**2015-2016 Minnesota Energy Programs Application Printing Update**

At this time the (attached) 2015-2016 Minnesota Energy Programs Applications are available for local printing and training purposes only. Do not distribute, publish on your local website or make applications available to households until the state mailing of Recertification Apps and PreApps is complete. The application release date will be announced in *The Energizer* or *A Spark*.



## Notices

### Commerce News Release

August 25, 2015

## Minnesota Customers of TerraCom's Lifeline Phone Service May Be Eligible for One Year of Free Credit Monitoring

**Investigation found that the company failed to protect consumers' personal information**

**For Immediate Release:**

SAINT PAUL – The Minnesota Department of Commerce and Minnesota Public Utilities Commission are alerting Minnesota customers of TerraCom Inc's Lifeline phone service that they may be eligible for one year of free credit monitoring due to a data breach at the company.

In 2013, a national news story reported that personal information for some of TerraCom's customers could be accessed through the Internet. In response, the Commerce Department and Public Utilities Commission initiated an investigation into the data breach and TerraCom's handling of customer information. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) initiated a similar investigation at the national level.

At the time, TerraCom had more than 2,400 wireless phone customers in Minnesota affected by the breach. TerraCom serves Minnesotans through the federal Lifeline program, which provides discounted phone service to eligible low-income consumers.

The FCC investigation found that TerraCom's vendor stored customers' personal information on unprotected servers that were accessible over the Internet. This included names, addresses, Social Security numbers, birthdates and other sensitive information.

The FCC recently reached a \$3.5 million settlement with TerraCom and a related company. As a condition of the settlement, TerraCom is required to develop and implement a data security compliance plan to protect customer

information. In addition, the company must notify all customers whose information was subject to unauthorized access and offer them free credit monitoring services for one year.

“These corrective actions required of TerraCom should send a strong message to the company and the entire industry that the private data of their customers is to be vigorously protected,” said Beverly Jones Heydinger, Chair of the Commission.

“All telephone companies have a responsibility to safeguard their customers’ personal information, particularly with the duty and increasing need to protect against cybersecurity attacks,” said Commerce Commissioner Mike Rothman. “It’s important that TerraCom’s customers know they may be eligible for this free credit monitoring to protect against identity theft.”

The Commerce Department and Public Utilities Commission are concerned that some of TerraCom’s Minnesota customers may not receive the company’s notification because of address changes or other reasons.

Consumers who were enrolled with TerraCom’s Lifeline service in 2013 and believe they may be eligible for the free credit monitoring should contact TerraCom at 877-351-4747.

The Commerce Department’s Telecommunications Division can be reached by email at [telecom.commerce@state.mn.us](mailto:telecom.commerce@state.mn.us) or by phone at 651-539-1883.

The Commission’s Consumer Affairs Office can be reached by email at [consumer.puc@state.mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc@state.mn.us) or by phone at 651-296-0406 or 800-657-3782.

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