

## Cold Weather Rule FAQs

### ***How do I sign up for CWR?***

- Contact your natural gas or electric company and request a CWR payment plan. Your utility will provide you with forms to complete to apply for CWR.
- If you have received a shutoff notice, your utility will work with you to prevent disconnection. Your utility must deliver a shut off notice before your service can be disconnected.
- If your service has been shut off, the utility will work with you to set up a payment plan and to turn your service back on.
- Once you make and keep a CWR payment plan, the utility will turn on your heat. As long as you make your payments, you are protected from shutoff until April 30.
- All utilities should have an appeal process. If you cannot agree on a payment plan with your utility, you can ask your regulated utility for an Appeal form. If your service is provided by a municipal utility or electric cooperative, you can ask for the Inability to Pay form.
- If your utility is unable to assist you with this, the Commission's Consumer Affairs Office can help you.

### ***Appeals or Inability to Pay***

- If you and the utility cannot agree on a payment plan, you can request an Appeal form from your natural gas or electric company, or an Inability to Pay form from your municipal utility or electric cooperative.
- You must submit your Appeal form to the Commission within 10 days of the date on the form. You must submit the Inability to Pay form to your municipal utility or electric cooperative promptly.
- The Commission can help you to work with your utility to set up a payment plan.
- Your service will stay on during the appeal process.

### ***What if I have a payment plan and I can't make my payment?***

- If you can't make your payments, **call your utility immediately** to make a new CWR payment plan.
- If you do not make your payments, your service may be shut off and your utility does not have to set up another payment plan until the next CWR season.

### ***Does CWR apply to all utilities?***

- No, delivered fuels such as fuel oil, propane and wood are not covered by the CWR but propane dealers must offer a budget billing plan.
- If your oil, wood or propane furnace is run by electricity you should apply for CWR protection with your electric company.

### ***Utility Responsibilities***

- Your utility will connect you to Energy Assistance Programs and Weatherization Assistance Programs. These offer assistance with paying your bill or helping you take steps to reduce your bill. There are income guidelines to qualify.
- The utility must work with you to set up a payment plan that is reasonable for the financial circumstances of your household.
- Before disconnecting service between October 1 and April 30, the natural gas and electric companies must provide you with:
  - Notice of disconnection
  - Payment plan options to stop a disconnection
  - Information on how you can appeal if you and the utility cannot agree on a payment plan
  - A list of local energy assistance and weatherization providers
  - A list of no-cost and low-cost methods to conserve energy
  - A Third Party Notice form
  - If you have trouble keeping up with utility bills and notices, ask your utility for a Third Party Notice form. The utility will send copies of notices to the person your Third Party to help you stay connected.
  - The Third Party is not responsible for paying any bills.

***What if I am a renter?***

- Renters are eligible for CWR protection, service must be in your name.
- The electric or natural gas service must be your source for heat.
- If the natural gas or electric service is in your landlord's name, the utility must notify tenants by posting a notice in the building. Tenants can request to become the bill payer if the landlord has not paid the bill.