

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS

- Caulk and weather strip cracks around doors and window frames. Bock openings at bottom of doors to prevent drafts.
- Lower the setting on your thermostat at night and dress warmly.
- Lower the setting on your water heater to 120° F (normal)
- Run dishwasher only when it is full.
- Open shades during the winter days to let the sunlight in and close the shades at night.
- Limit the use of portable space heaters.
- Wash clothes with warm water and rinse them in cold water.
- Leaking faucets should be repaired promptly, especially hot water.
- Turn off all unused lights and appliances.
- Close all windows tightly and use locks to prevent cold air leaking in. Cover drafty windows with plastic.
- Broken windows should be repaired immediately and close all storm windows.
- Window air conditioning units should be covered or removed during the heating season.
- Furnace filters should be kept clean.
- Furnaces should be checked for safe and efficient operation at least once a year.
- Vacuum refrigerator and freezer coils every six months to improve efficiency.
- Close off unused rooms.

### Cold Weather Protection Payment Plan Form

Please note that all payment plans must be approved/agreed on by our office AND it is the members responsibility to make and keep the arrangement to avoid disconnection during winter months. Our office will make 1 payment arrangement between October 15-April 15. If you fail to keep that arrangement we will not make any future arrangements and the balance will be due in full.

**\*\*THIS SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED!!!\*\***

Month	Payment Amount	Payment Dates
October:	_____	_____
November:	_____	_____
December:	_____	_____
January:	_____	_____
February:	_____	_____
March:	_____	_____
April:	_____	_____

## COLD WEATHER DISCONNECT PROTECTION INABILITY TO PAY FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

REC Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Household Income \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Sources of Income (Check all that apply):

\_\_\_\_\_ Job /Employment/Self employed

\_\_\_\_\_ Unemployment/Worker's Comp.

\_\_\_\_\_ Child/Spousal Support/Alimony/Spousal

\_\_\_\_\_ Social Security/SSI and/or Disability

\_\_\_\_\_ Other income type \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of persons living in the household/residence: \_\_\_\_\_

I have already been approved for fuel assistance or emergency assistance from a local Energy Assistance Agency based on my income. Assistance Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Disabled Person: Please check if a person in your home is disabled and receiving disability benefits.

I have a medical device that is needed for me to sustain life. (A signed medical note from your doctor stating the medical device required to sustain life and the medical condition MUST be turned into our office annually) This alone does not protect you from disconnection as you MUST make and keep a payment arrangement too.

By signing this form, I hereby authorize Redwood Electric to exchange billing information to any assistance provider.

MEMBER SIGNATURE

DATE

## Minnesota Cold Weather Rule

### Important Information Regarding Delinquent Bills & Winter Disconnects

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule does NOT prevent ALL winter disconnects.

If you receive a disconnection notice in **RED** on your monthly bill, you must act promptly and contact Redwood Electric Cooperative immediately.



**REC**  
Redwood Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Phone: 1-888-251-5100

SmartHub: redwoodelectric.smarthub.coop

Pay-By-Phone: 1-844-846-2696

Office Hours: Monday-Friday

7:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Office/Dropbox location:

60 Pine St. Clements, MN 56224

**Read the Notice of Residential Member Rights and Possible Assistance on the reverse side of this notice BEFORE completing the Cold Weather Disconnect Protection Form on the back of this brochure.**

## THE COLD WEATHER RULE PROVIDES YOU WITH THESE OPTIONS

**The RIGHT** to request and complete the Cold Weather Disconnect Protection Form. If you do so and if your household income is less than 50% of the state median income, the service affecting your primary heat source cannot be disconnected for nonpayment of your bill. However, we have the right to accept or reject your request based on information supplied or other supporting documentation.

**The RESPONSIBILITY**, if you choose to complete the Cold Weather Disconnect Protection Form you must return it to our office prior to the disconnect date. You must contact us immediately to arrange a payment plan.

**The RIGHT** to a mutually agreeable payment schedule with us. The schedule will cover your existing arrears plus the estimated usage during the payment schedule period. All members that qualify for Cold Weather Protection are allowed one (1) Payment Arrangement, if you to keep or break the agreed upon arrangement, no future arrangement will be made. Balances will be due in full to avoid disconnection. If you honor your agreed upon arrangement you will be allowed future arrangements.

**The RIGHT** not to be involuntarily disconnected on a Friday or a day before a holiday, or until at least twenty (20) days after the postmark on the notice to disconnect (located in **RED** on your monthly electric bill) or until fifteen (15) days after the notice and information has been personally delivered.

**The RIGHT** not to be disconnected until the coop investigates whether the residential unit is actually occupied, the coop must immediately inform the member of the provisions of this section. If the unit is unoccupied, the coop must give seven days' written notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy assistance provider before making a disconnection.

**The RIGHT** to appeal the disconnection of service to the Redwood Electric Cooperative Board of Directors. You must inform our office and deliver or mail a personal letter stating your situation and issues in dispute. Your letter must be in our hands before the disconnection date. No disconnection of service will take place during the appeal process.

## NOTICE OF RESIDENTIAL MEMBER RIGHTS AND POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE

This notice informs you of your rights and responsibilities under the Cold Weather Rule. They are designed to help you with high winter electric bills. You must act PROMPTLY. If you choose not to assert your rights or choose not to enter a mutually acceptable payment plan, your service may be disconnected.

An electric cooperative must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential member during the period between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit **and all of the following conditions are met:**

1. The household income of the member is at or below 50% of the state median household income. Income may be verified on forms provided by the Cooperative or by the local energy assistance provider. A member meets the income requirement if the member receives energy assistance or other types of public assistance that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50% of the state median household income; and
2. A member enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household; and
3. A member receives from the cooperative referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the member's energy bills.

IF YOU DO NOT MEET ALL THE CONDITIONS OF THE COLD WEATHER LAW AS OUTLINED ON THIS FORM, YOU DO NOT QUALIFY FOR WINTER SHUTOFF PROTECTION.

However, you still can continue to receive electric service if you call us to set up a mutually acceptable payment arrangement and keep that arrangement. Call Redwood Electric **BEFORE** the disconnect notice due date.

**IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTACT OUR OFFICE BEFORE THE DISCONNECT DATE!**

## Assistance Providers:

**United Community Action-Marshall**  
PatE@unitedcapmn.org  
1400 South Saratoga Street  
Marshall, MN 56258  
Ph. 507-537-1416  
Fax 507-537-1849

**United Community Action-Willmar**  
PatE@unitedcapmn.org  
200 SW 4th St.  
PO Box 1359  
Willmar, MN 56201  
Ph. 320-235-0850 or 1-800-992-1710  
Fax 320-235-7703

**United Community Action-Redwood Falls**  
164 E. 2nd Street  
PO Box 172  
Redwood Falls, MN 56283  
**Redwood County Human Services**  
266 E Bridge Street  
Redwood Falls, MN 56283  
507-637-4041

Toll Free: 888-234-1292  
Human Services Fax: 507-637-4055  
**The Salvation Army HeatShare**  
1-800-842-7279

**United Way 2-1-1** (1 is a free and confidential service that can help you find local resources.)  
Dial 211

**\*\*\*Please note that Redwood Electric is NOT automatically notified of energy assistance approval and approval alone does NOT protect you from disconnection. YOU as the member NEED to contact our office AND make other arrangements as NEEDED AND the special payment arrangements MUST be kept!! This is very important to avoid disconnection during winter months!!\*\*\***

**216B.097 COLD WEATHER RULE; COOPERATIVE OR MUNICIPAL UTILITY.**

Subdivision 1. **Application; notice to residential customer.** (a) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. A municipal utility or cooperative electric association utility may (i) verify income on forms it provides or (ii) obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income.

(2) A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.

(3) A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

(b) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must, between August 15 and October 15 each year, notify all residential customers of the provisions of this section.

Subd. 2. **Notice to residential customer facing disconnection.** Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during the period between October 15 and April 15, a municipal utility or cooperative electric association must provide the following information to a customer:

(1) a notice of proposed disconnection;

(2) a statement explaining the customer's rights and responsibilities;

(3) a list of local energy assistance providers;

(4) forms on which to declare inability to pay; and

(5) a statement explaining available time payment plans and other opportunities to secure continued utility service.

Subd. 3. **Restrictions if disconnection necessary.** (a) If a residential customer must be involuntarily disconnected between October 15 and April 15 for failure to comply with subdivision 1, the disconnection must not occur:

(1) on a Friday, unless the customer declines to enter into a payment agreement offered that day in person or via personal contact by telephone by a municipal utility or cooperative electric association;

(2) on a weekend, holiday, or the day before a holiday;

(3) when utility offices are closed; or

(4) after the close of business on a day when disconnection is permitted, unless a field representative of a municipal utility or cooperative electric association who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement, accept payment, and continue service, offers a payment agreement to the customer.

Further, the disconnection must not occur until at least 20 days after the notice required in subdivision 2 has been mailed to the customer or 15 days after the notice has been personally delivered to the customer.

(b) If a customer does not respond to a disconnection notice, the customer must not be disconnected until the utility investigates whether the residential unit is actually occupied. If the unit is found to be occupied, the utility must immediately inform the occupant of the provisions of this section. If the unit is unoccupied, the utility must give seven days' written notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy assistance provider before making a disconnection.

(c) If, prior to disconnection, a customer appeals a notice of involuntary disconnection, as provided by the utility's established appeal procedure, the utility must not disconnect until the appeal is resolved.

Subd. 4. **Application to service limiters.** For the purposes of this section, "disconnection" includes a service or load limiter or any device that limits or interrupts electric service in any way.

**History:** 1991 c 235 art 2 s 1; 2001 c 212 art 4 s 2; 1Sp2003 c 11 art 3 s 2; 2007 c 57 art 2 s 14,15