

MINNESOTA COLD WEATHER RULE (CWR) BEGINS OCTOBER 1st

The State of Minnesota created the Cold Weather Rule (CWR) to protect residential customers from having their electric or natural gas service disconnected between October 1 and April 30. While it does not completely prevent winter disconnections, it offers additional protection during these months.

To qualify, you must sign a CWR Payment Plan, specify a monthly payment amount, and keep payments current each month from the date the agreement is signed through April 30, even if your account has a credit due to assistance from Minnesota Valley Action Council or other outside payments through April. If you receive a disconnection notice, it is important to act immediately.

Please read this notice carefully to understand the steps required to prevent disconnection, how to have service reconnected, and your right to appeal. Detailed information about the Minnesota Cold Weather Rule is available at MMLP. For questions or to learn more, visit www.madelialightandpower.com and click on Minnesota Cold Weather Rule from the Residential drop down menu.

What to do if you receive a Notice of Proposed Disconnect or if your service has been disconnected:

To avoid service disconnect or to have service reconnected, you must either pay your bill in full or enter into a Payment Plan. You must keep the Payment Plan during CWR months (October to April) to continue to receive protection from disconnection.

Payment Plan: Once you and MMLP agree on a Payment Plan, and you continue to make your payments, your electric service will not be shut off. The Payment Plan will consider your financial circumstances, and any extenuating circumstances, and must be acceptable to you and MMLP. **You must continue payments monthly, even if your account has received benefits from Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC) or other outside payments through April.** If you and MMLP are unable to agree on a Payment Plan, you have a right to appeal.

If you receive Energy Assistance, you are automatically eligible for protection under the MN CWR and MMLP will not require you to pay more than 10% of your monthly household income toward your utility bill. If you meet income guidelines set by the state but do not receive Energy Assistance, these special payment terms are also available to you with proof of income.

How do I apply for Cold Weather Rule protection? *The application is on the reverse side of this notice. Complete and present, with required documentation, to MMLP business office, 24 Abbot Ave SW, Mon-Fri, 8 – 4:30 p.m. or mail to address on application.*

What happens after I apply? *If you make and keep a CWR Payment Plan, you are protected from disconnection or will be reconnected if already disconnected.*

Right to Appeal: *If you and MMLP cannot agree on the amount of your Payment Plan, you have the right to appeal with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC). During this time MMLP will not shut off your service or will reconnect your service if you have been disconnected. The MPUC has 20 days to decide about your Payment Plan after receiving the appeal form.*

FOR ASSISTANCE PAYING YOUR BILL:

- Minnesota Valley Action Council offers resources for heating assistance, furnace repairs, and weatherization. Visit www.mnvac.org or call 1-800-767-7139
- Watonwan County Human Services provides financial assistance to help pay for food, shelter, or utility payment assistance in crisis situations. Visit www.ApplyMN.dhs.mn.gov. or call 1-888-299-5941.
- The Salvation Army offers numerous services for families in need. Visit www.centralusa.salvationarmyusa.org/northern/Mankato

MN LAW REGARDING UTILITY PAYMENTS FOR ACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL: Minnesota law provides that a municipal utility must not disconnect the service of a residential customer if a member of a household has been issued orders into active military duty, for deployment, or for a permanent change in duty station during active duty, provided that the customer enters into an agreement with the utility to make payments toward the utility bill. Call our office at 642-8803 for more information.

ENERGY SAVING TIPS FOR WINTER MONTHS:

- Turn down your thermostat 5° to 10° degrees while you are away or asleep. Consider installing a programmable thermostat.
- Turn down your water heater temperature to 120° or 125°.
- Place window film on the interior of leaky or drafty windows, and open curtains when the sun is shining.
- Change furnace filters and vacuum heat registers and return air vents regularly and make sure they aren't blocked by furniture.
- Caulk and weather strip around doors and windows.
- Space heaters – limit use as they are very expensive to run.
- Ceiling fans – slide switch on motor housing to up position to blow air upward.
- Rebates offered through MMLP's Conservation Improvement Program can be found at www.madelialightandpower.com.

NOTIFY OUR OFFICE (507-642-8803) IF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY EXISTS IN YOUR HOME, or if an interruption of service affects necessary medical equipment.