

MINNESOTA COLD WEATHER RULE (CWR) BEGINS OCTOBER 1, 2022

The State of Minnesota set up the Cold Weather Rule to protect residential customers from having their electric utility service and natural gas service disconnected from October 1st through April 30th. It does not completely stop winter disconnections but provides customers extra protection during these months. You must sign a CWR Payment Plan, agree to a payment amount, and make those payments each month to be protected. If you receive a disconnection notice, you must act immediately. Read this notice to learn the steps you must take to prevent disconnection of electric service; steps you must take to have electric service reconnected; and about your right to appeal. Detailed information regarding MN CWR is available in our office. If you have any questions about the CWR call our office at 507-642-8803.

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

*In order to **avoid** service disconnection 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 in order 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. It will cover what you owe plus the amount you will be billed during the period of the Payment Plan. Most payment plans under the CWR last until April 30th unless you agree on a different period. 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? *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 make a decision 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.
- United Way offers assistance with past due rent and utilities. Visit www.RentHelpMN.org or call 211

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