

How do I apply for protection under the Cold Weather Rule?

If you are struggling to pay your electric bill and need protection from having your service shut off—you must act promptly!

If you have not applied for Energy Assistance—please contact your local energy assistance provider as soon as possible to see if you qualify! (Telephone numbers for Energy Assistance Providers are included in this brochure.)

IMPORTANT: SUBMITTING A COLD WEATHER INCOME DECLARATION FORM OR QUALIFYING FOR ENERGY ASSISTANCE WILL NOT AUTOMATICALLY STOP A DISCONNECT OF ELECTRICAL SERVICE DURING THE COLD WEATHER SEASON!

You must also contact the Cooperative and enter into a payment plan that you and the Cooperative both agree on.

You must continue to make the promised payments as indicated in the payment agreement.

REQUIREMENTS OF THE COOPERATIVE

Prior to disconnecting an electrical service between the dates of October 1 and April 30, the Cooperative must provide you with the following:

- A Notice of Proposed Disconnection
- The opportunity to enter into a payment plan that you and the Cooperative agree on based on the financial resources of the household
- An appeal process for you to follow if a payment plan cannot be agreed upon
- A list of local energy assistance providers
- A list of NO-COST and LOW-COST methods to conserve energy

YOU MUST ACT promptly to avoid a proposed disconnection! Beltrami Electric would rather work with you than disconnect your electrical service.

YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule was established to protect residential customers from electric service disconnect between October 1 and April 30. You may receive Cold Weather Rule protection if all three of the following conditions apply to you:

1. The disconnect would affect your main heating source;
2. Your household income is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income;
3. You and the Cooperative agree to a payment plan.

You have:

- **The RIGHT** to declare an inability to pay your electric bill to Beltrami Electric.
- **The RESPONSIBILITY** to provide documentation for income verification to Beltrami Electric if requested.
- **The RIGHT** to designate a Third Party*. A third party could be a friend, relative, church or a community agency. They could be especially helpful for the ill, senior citizens, or those who live alone to assist in helping you understand your rights and responsibilities to avoid the hardship of a disconnection during the winter. A designated third party can receive copies of all disconnect notices if requested but would not be responsible for paying your electric bill or payment arrangements.
*** To designate a THIRD PARTY on your account, contact Beltrami Electric to request an Authorized Contact Agreement.**
- **The RIGHT** to enter into a payment plan that you and the Cooperative both agree on.
- **The RESPONSIBILITY** to pay the agreed upon payment agreement.
- **The RIGHT** not to be disconnected until at least 30 calendar days after the mailing of your proposed disconnect notice.
- **The RIGHT** to appeal your proposed disconnect of service to the Cooperative if you are unable to agree upon a payment plan. Your service will not be disconnected until your appeal is resolved.
- **The RESPONSIBILITY**, if you choose to appeal, submit a personal letter of appeal stating your situation and issues in the dispute. Your letter of appeal must arrive at the Cooperative before the date of the proposed disconnection. The appeal will be reviewed by the Cooperative to determine a fair and reasonable resolution to the dispute. The resolution will be presented to the member and agreed upon by both the member and the Cooperative to resolve the appeal.
- If you do not qualify for protection under the Cold Weather Rule but still wish to enter into a payment agreement - contact the Cooperative immediately. The Cooperative would prefer to work with you on your balance rather than disconnect your electrical service.

LOW COST/NO COST ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS

- Caulk and weatherstrip cracks around doors and window frames. Block 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/medium).
- Turn off large-screen TV's when not in use.
- Open shades during winter days to let the warm sunlight in and close the shades at night.
- Wash clothes in cold water. Use hot water only for very dirty loads.
- Leaking faucets should be repaired promptly, especially hot water.
- Turn off unused lights and appliances.
- Close all windows tightly and use locks to prevent cold air leaking in. Cover all 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 at all times.
- 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.
- Limit/minimize use of electric space heaters.
- Install low flow shower heads and flow restrictors in faucets.

For more helpful energy-saving hints, visit www.touchstoneenergy.com/efficiency

Cold Weather Declaration of Income

This form can be submitted to the Cooperative to show income verification and to declare inability to pay your electric bill. The Cooperative will use this information to help the member find available assistance as well as establish a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household to prevent the proposed disconnect of electric service.

Submission of this form will NOT PREVENT THE PROPOSED DISCONNECT! You must also contact the Cooperative to establish an agreed upon payment plan!

Name _____
Account Number _____
Total Amount Owed _____
Address _____
City _____ State __ Zip _____
Telephone Number(s) _____

Total Annual (yearly) Household Income: \$ _____
Total Number of Persons in Household: _____

Source(s) of Income (fill out all that apply):

Employment _____
Unemployment _____
Social Security _____
VA _____
Other Disability _____
Cash Assistance _____
(Type of Assistance) _____
Other Income _____

Check if these conditions exist in your home:

____ Medical Necessity
____ Disabled person in your home
____ Deployed Military Service Personnel

By signing this form, I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand my "RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES" (printed in this brochure). I declare that the above information is true and correct. I give my permission to Beltrami Electric to exchange my income and billing information with energy providers or assistance agencies for the purpose of program qualifications.

Member Signature _____
Date _____

Contact Beltrami Electric at (218) 444-2540 to set up a payment agreement plan.

Energy Assistance Providers Serving
Beltrami Electric Cooperative

Bi-Cap in Bemidji
6603 Bemidji Ave N, Bemidji, MN 56601
Phone: 218-751-4631 Fax: 218-333-9910

Bi-Cap in Walker
8245 Industrial Park Rd NW, Walker, MN 56484
Phone: 218-547-3438 Fax: 218-547-3809

Kootasca
201 4th St NW, Ste 130, Grand Rapids, MN 55744
Phone: 218-999-0824 Fax: 218-999-0845

Leech Lake
115 6th Street NW, Cass Lake, MN 56633
Phone: 218-335-3783 Fax: 218-335-3729

MAHUBE-OTWA
120 North Central Ave, Park Rapids, MN 56470
Phone: 218-732-7204 Fax: 218-732-7206

Red Lake
15809 High School Dr, Red Lake, MN 56671
Phone: 218-679-3350 Fax: 218-679-4291

MN Statewide EAP Office
1-800-657-3710

Visit www.beltramielctric.com to find links to the above agencies. 07/2023

MILITARY SERVICE PERSONNEL ASSISTANCE
Special consideration may be given when a household member has been deployed on military duty. If this applies to you - contact the Cooperative immediately to identify your situation and schedule a payment plan.
MN Statute 325E.028

MEDICAL NECESSITY
If a household member has necessary medical equipment that requires electricity to sustain life—please contact the Cooperative to complete the required paperwork and schedule a payment plan.
MN Statute 216B.098 Subd 5

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule

MN Statute 216B.097

Can my electricity be turned off in the winter?

Yes!

The law does allow for Beltrami Electric Cooperative to disconnect during the Cold Weather Rule period!

Please act promptly!! Beltrami Electric would rather work with members to set up an agreed upon payment plan than disconnect an electrical service.

Disconnection of electrical service may occur from October 1 to April 30 during the Cold Weather Rule period after providing the following:

- Notice of proposed disconnection
- Statement explaining rights and responsibilities
- List of energy assistance providers
- Forms to declare inability to pay (A Cold Weather Declaration of Income form is provided on the back of this brochure.)
- The opportunity for the member to enter into and make reasonable and timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household in order to prevent a proposed disconnection.

What if I can't make my scheduled payment?

Contact Beltrami Electric Cooperative immediately!



Business Hours
8:00 am - 4:30 pm Monday - Friday
218-444-2540
800-955-6083
www.beltramielctric.com

"This Institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer".