

Customer Protection: How to Avoid Disconnection

1. Collect your electricity bill from your mailbox:

Electricity bills are posted to your mailbox. Customers of Wellington North Power receive their electricity bills each month typically on or shortly after the 16th day of each month.

2. Due Date:

Be aware of the Due Date – i.e. when the payment of your electricity bill is due. For Wellington North Power customers, the Due Date is typically the 1st Monday of the month.

Paying on or before the Due Date will avoid Late Payment fees being applied to your account. Late payment penalties are a way to encourage prompt payment of bills. When you pay on time, it reduces additional costs to your utility provider ... and that lowers delivery rates for all consumers.

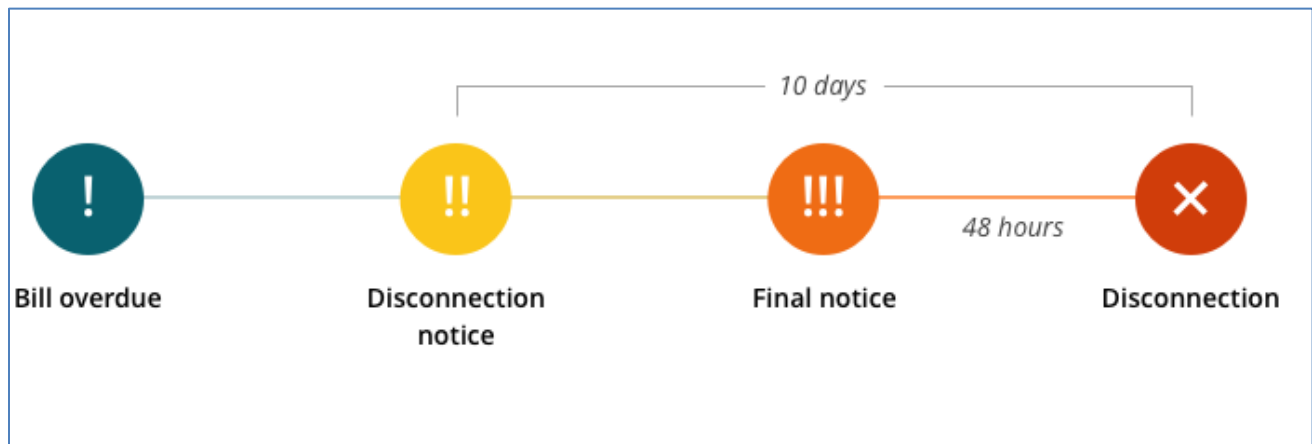
3. Timely Bill Payment:

If you fail to pay your electricity bill, your electricity provider can disconnect your supply.

If you have paid a security deposit, it will be applied to the amount you owe before your electricity supply is disconnected.

Your electricity provider must give you at least **10 days' notice** before disconnecting you. If you inform them that a social service agency is checking to see if you qualify for assistance under our low-income energy consumer programs, the electricity provider will delay disconnecting your service for up to 21 days.

The chart below shows the timeline for disconnections:



4. Avoiding disconnection

To avoid disconnection, it is important to contact your electricity provider as soon as you receive the Disconnection Notice - **Do not delay**.

The quickest way to keep your electricity connected is by paying your outstanding balance.

If you cannot pay the amount you owe, you have the option of setting up a payment arrangement. To discuss and set-up a payment arrangement, for Wellington North Power customers, please call 519-323-1710 or e-mail customerservice@wellingtonnorthpower.com

Further information:

The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) is Ontario's independent energy regulator, monitoring energy companies to ensure they are following the rules as well as providing timely and helpful information about energy matters for residential consumers and small businesses.

The OEB recommends customers follow 5 steps to avoid disconnection:

Step 1: Know the rules:

The OEB has special rules in place to ensure low-income customers are treated fairly. These rules include waiving security deposits, a fee often charged to customers struggling with their electricity bills, allowing longer payback periods under arrears payment plans and offering a longer grace period to customers before being disconnected.

Know your rights: 10 things a utility company MUST do before cutting off your power

- Give at least 10 days' notice before disconnecting a customer for non-payment.
- Give at least 60 days' notice before disconnecting a customer with a doctor's note stating disconnection could pose "significant adverse effects" to the physical health of anyone living in the home.
- Provide detailed information — on the disconnection notice itself — about emergency funding available through the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP).
- Suspend disconnection for 21 days for any customer who has applied to LEAP.
- Provide information on payment arrangements and equal billing options.
- Provide information on low-income assistance programs like the Ontario Electricity Support Program.
- Make "reasonable efforts" to contact a customer in-person or by phone 48 hours before disconnection.
- Clearly identify on the disconnection notice any service charges or fees that could apply when a customer is reconnected.
- Provide customers with a copy of the fire safety notice prepared by the Office of the Fire Marshall, as well as any other relevant safety notices.
- A utility company cannot disconnect a customer with a smart meter based solely on an estimated bill.

Step 2: Contact your utility provider

To benefit from many of these rules, customers must first contact their utility provider.

Once contacted, the OEB expects companies to work with customers to set up arrears payment plans families can afford and to facilitate enrolment in the province's various energy assistance programs.

Step 3: Apply for financial support

[The Ontario Electricity Support Program](#) helps reduce hydro bills by providing an on-bill credit of \$30 to \$50 a month for [eligible low-income households](#). Indigenous low-income customers, and those with special medical equipment, can receive additional supports of up to \$75 a month through the program.

[The Low-income Energy Assistance Program](#), or LEAP, provides once-a-year emergency funding to customers facing disconnection. [Eligible customers](#) receive up to \$500 toward their bill, while all customers receive an additional 21-day grace period before disconnection once an application is received by LEAP.

Step 4: Become more energy-efficient

The [saveONenergy Home Assistance Program](#) provides homeowners and tenants with free LED lightbulbs, programmable thermostats and high-efficiency ceiling fans. Some customers may also be eligible to receive enhanced weatherproofing, more insulation and new appliances.

Step 5: Contact the OEB

Electricity customers in Ontario have a right to [contact the OEB](#). If you believe your utility provider has not followed the rules correctly, or if you need more information, you can visit the OEB's website <https://www.oeb.ca> or call 1-877-632-2727.