

electricity, start saving today!

waterpower

Code of Practice on
Disconnections

Domestic/Household

Waterpower,
Strand St.,
Kanturk,
Co.Cork

T: (029) 50568 / (087) 165 11 65
E: customer care@waterpower.ie

www.Waterpower.ie

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This code of practice outlines the processes employed by Waterpower in relation to disconnection of electricity supply for domestic/household customers. For the purposes of this code 'Disconnection' refers to locking/unlocking, de-energisation/energisation of electricity supply. We urge any customers experiencing difficulty in making payments to contact our customer care team as soon as possible.

For the avoidance of doubt, disconnections for safety reasons to prevent injury to persons or damage to property may be made at any time and are not within the scope of this Disconnection Code of Practice

Reasons for Disconnection

- The registered account holder requests the supply to be disconnected
- Disconnection of premises with no registered account holder
- The customer has outstanding debt and refuses to enter into a payment arrangement, or breaks an agreed payment arrangement. Please note that disconnection due to non-payment is only carried out as a last resort
- In the event of an emergency, Electricity Supply Board Networks (ESBN) may disconnect supply for safety reasons

Disconnection will not take place:

- Where a customer has entered into a payment plan with Waterpower and is honouring this arrangement
- Where a customer is pursuing a complaint using the complaint handling procedures specified in this document and the complaint is related to the reason for disconnection
- Where the matter which caused the arrears to arise is still being considered by us or by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)
- For failure to pay a bill based on a regular estimate unless it is fair and reasonable in the circumstances
- In the event that a customer is disputing a bill, this clause only applies to the disputed bill and not any previous or subsequent bills which must be paid as normal

Disconnection will not take place if (continued)

- Where a customer is a member of any category of customer that the CRU may specify from time to time
- During the winter months where a person appropriately registered as a Vulnerable Customers with their supplier
- The customer relies on a recognised life support system and is appropriately registered in accordance with the Code of Practice on Vulnerable Customers
- A customer fails to pay a bill which is not related to the supply of electricity (e.g. failure to comply with a hire purchase agreement related to the purchase of an electrical appliance or any service given outside of the supply of electricity)
- No disconnection will take place on a weekend (Friday, Saturday, Sunday) or eve of a public holiday or on an actual public holiday

Experiencing difficulty in paying your bills? Let us work with you

If you are experiencing difficulty in paying your bills we will be more than happy to help. It is important to contact us as soon as possible to avoid the accumulation of debt. We guarantee that:

- we will hear each case sympathetically and carefully consider any offers of repayment
- where appropriate, we will provide domestic customers with the information on relevant third parties that may be in a position to assist (i.e. recognised charities, community welfare office, Money Advisory Board (MABS))
- we will work with you to arrange a reasonable and affordable debt recovery arrangement which take into account your circumstances
- we will facilitate customers who wish to nominate a third party to represent them in arranging their payment plan providing appropriate consent has been provided
- once a payment plan is agreed we will communicate these arrangements and any terms associated with this agreement to the customer in written format no later than one week after it has been agreed.
- we will continue to work with you and monitor the agreed plan to ensure the payment plan is 'fit for purpose'
- In the event that a payment plan is found unsuitable, Waterpower will propose the installation of a Pay As You Go (PAYG) meter. Please refer to our code of practice on PAYG meters.

A) Process for disconnection due to non-payment

Waterpower will make every reasonable effort not to disconnect a customer due to non-payment and consider it the absolute last resort. Should this arise, customers can expect the following course of action:

Initial contact regarding the risk of disconnection for non-payment

- Waterpower will include a short, informal notice on your bill that you are in arrears and that continued non-payment will escalate the case to your supply being at risk of disconnection
- If the bill has not been paid or no effort to do so by the next billing period, Waterpower will make at least two attempts to contact you by telephone to inform you that your account is in arrears.

Initial written notice of non-payment

After the initial note on a customer's bill indicating arrears has been forwarded, the following information will be forwarded by written notice in the next billing cycle:

- An outline of arrears on the account
- Invitation to enter into a payment plan with Waterpower
- Identifying the risk of disconnection due to non-payment
- Information on any options to make payment and identify payment plan options
- Contact details for support agencies such as the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) or another agency that is acceptable to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)
- Where appropriate and feasible, we will advise the installation of a pre-payment meter or budget controller
- Note that no payment can be accepted by the person adjusting the meter

Two additional attempts will be made to contact you in writing with an outline of the arrears on your account and payment options. This will be followed by a phone-call. Each attempt to establish contact will take place no less than three days apart

Escalation to final notice

Where all efforts to resolve the matter have been exhausted and our only option is to initiate disconnection, the customer will be issued with a written notice no less than 10 working days in advance of notifying the Electricity Supply Board of our intention to disconnect

Final Written Notice of disconnection due to non-payment

- Outline of Reason for disconnection (due to non-payment)
- An outline of arrears held on the account
- Actual cost of disconnection and re connection
- Administrative cost of disconnection
- Any charge which may apply to the customer if the disconnection is cancelled or no access is possible at the premises
- Information on any options to make payment and identify payment plan options
- Contact details for support agencies such as the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) or another agency that is acceptable to the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)
- Where appropriate and feasible, we will advise the installation of a pre-payment meter or budget controller
- Note that no payment can be accepted by the person adjusting the meter

End of Process

- Any customers wishing to clear arrears upon receipt of this notice will be facilitated immediately and the matter will be considered closed
- Any customers wishing to enter into a payment plan will be directed to our customer care team manager to arrange the next step forward
- Where a customer opts for disconnection, any arrears must still be recouped and any associated charges as stated in the initial correspondence

Vulnerable Customers

Please refer to our Code of Practice for Vulnerable Customers which is available from our website www.waterpower.ie or upon request. As a summary, for the purposes of this Code of Practice on Disconnection please note the following:

- where a registered vulnerable customer has nominated a correspondence re-direction service on their application, the disconnection notice need only be sent to the nominated carer/relative as specified and registered by the customer
- every effort will be made to advise the registered vulnerable customer or nominated contact of alternative methods of payment i.e. payment plan, pre-payment meters or budget controllers
- Waterpower acknowledges that prepayment meters or budget controllers may not be appropriate in every case thus all due diligence will be employed to ensure the correct means of payment is selected in every case

Reconnection

- Where a disconnected customer has reached a settlement, they will be entitled to be reconnected under our standard terms & conditions
- Following disconnection for non-payment and reconnection following settlement, a security deposit may be requested to safeguard against a future recurrence. In general, the standard deposit required is 300 euro - this figure is based on a two monthly bill.
- In all cases where a security deposit is required, clear conditions on how this will be repaid will be provided in writing. This will be refunded automatically after one year if credit terms are met. Please refer to our Security Deposit Policy via our website www.waterpower.ie or contacting us directly
- Where a customer is repeatedly disconnected, failed to make payment of bills or failed to maintain a payment plan then re connection will not be possible until all outstanding sums are settled. In this instance an increased security deposit and the installation of a Pay As You Go meter installed to help counter this risk

B) Disconnection of a premises with no registered account holder

- Where an existing account holder has closed their account and there is no new account holder, we will issue written notice immediately and follow the procedures outlined in Section A
- No account will be supplied indefinitely in the absence of a registered account holder thus in the instance where disconnection is the only viable option, written notice of the intention to request disconnection will be provided ten working days in advance. This notice will include details for the new occupier to open an account and any associated administrative charges. This process will continue as detailed in Section A unless otherwise instructed by a new occupier or owner.

Copies of our Customer Charter, Security Deposit Policy and other Codes are available from our website.