



energy+water
ombudsman
QUEENSLAND

HOW CAN EWOQ HELP?

If you are facing disconnection or restriction and can't pay your bill, we can:

- try and get you more time to pay
- help you negotiate an affordable payment plan
- refer you to agencies that distribute emergency funds
- ask the retailer to put a hold on the disconnection while you locate financial assistance
- give you information on financial assistance and how to save money on your bills.

If your energy supply has been disconnected or water restricted, we will check that the disconnection was lawful, and try to get you reconnected or your restriction lifted.

FINANCIAL COUNSELLING ADVICE

If you're not sure how much you can pay - or if you can't reach agreement with the company - it may help to talk to a financial counsellor. To find a financial counsellor in your area visit www.moneysmart.gov.au or call 1800 007 007.



Safety during disconnection

For safety, turn off and unplug your appliances before your electricity or gas is reconnected.

Be careful using candles or kerosene, especially around children.

Keep the fridge door closed so food will keep longer.

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland is here to help resolve complaints with your energy supplier across Queensland or water supplier in south east Queensland.

FREECALL 1800 662 837

INTERPRETER 131 450

TTY/VOICE 133 677

EMAIL complaints@ewoq.com.au

WEB www.ewoq.com.au

MAIL PO Box 3640
South Brisbane BC QLD 4101

LOCATIONS

Brisbane – Level 16, 53 Albert Street

Rockhampton – Level 2, 209 Bolsover Street

Cairns – Level 1, 15 Lake Street



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Facing disconnection

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland can help.





WHEN A RETAILER DISCONNECTS/RESTRICTS

Your retailer must give you fair notice before your energy is disconnected or water supply restricted. A reminder notice will initially be sent, providing you with five business days to address the issue and advising what will happen if you don't. If you fail to act on the reminder notice, a warning will be sent informing you that energy disconnection will occur in five business days or water restriction will occur in 10 business days. Warnings must include information on how EWOQ can help.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I RECEIVE A DISCONNECTION OR RESTRICTION NOTICE?

If you receive a notice, contact your retailer straight away, they may be able to help you. If you are having trouble paying your bill, there are a number of things your retailer can do to help:

- offer a payment plan
- inform you of rebates or concessions you may be entitled to
- provide access to a financial hardship program
- provide information on independent financial counselling
- offer an energy or water audit to identify where you can save money.

WHEN CAN I BE DISCONNECTED?

You can be disconnected or restricted for any of the following reasons:

- if you failed to pay a bill, security deposit or for connection services to your property
- if you didn't provide safe access to meters for three consecutive scheduled meter readings
- if there are health and safety concerns
- if there is an emergency, or at the request of police
- if you provide false information in order to be connected
- if you don't provide acceptable identification when requested by your retailer
- if you conduct illegal activities at the property
- if you cause damage to the distributor's equipment or interfere with a third party's supply.

ARE THERE RESTRICTIONS ON WHEN I CAN BE DISCONNECTED?

You cannot have your electricity or gas disconnected:

- before 8am or after 3pm on a business day
- on a Friday or the day before a public holiday
- on a weekend or a public holiday
- between 20 and 31 December (inclusive)
- if you or a member of your household relies on life support equipment
- if the disconnection is under investigation with EWOQ or another dispute resolution organisation.

Your water cannot be disconnected, however, your water flow can be severely restricted.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'VE BEEN DISCONNECTED?

If you have lost your electricity or gas, you should check if there is an outage in your area by calling the Loss of Supply phone number for your energy distributor, found on any of your previous bills.

If your electricity or gas has been disconnected you should have received a notice in your mailbox with information on who to contact to have your electricity or gas reconnected.

HOW CAN I GET RECONNECTED?

Call your energy or water company as soon as you realise your power has been disconnected or water restricted. You will usually need to pay something towards your bill or organise a payment plan, to establish reconnection or unrestricted water flow.

You may also be charged a reconnection fee. You will pay more if you want to reconnect outside of business hours.

In addition, you may be required to pay a security deposit. This can be up to 37.5 per cent of your estimated bills over a 12 month period.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM INCORRECTLY DISCONNECTED?

Sometimes mistakes occur and you might be wrongfully disconnected. If this happens, you may be entitled to a Guaranteed Service Level (GSL) payment if the distributor wrongly disconnected you when:

- it was not entitled to do so under legislation or a contract
- it failed to comply with the procedures required for disconnection
- the wrong premise was disconnected
- your retailer did not give you a disconnection warning.

Contact your distributor to claim your GSL.