

# MINNESOTA COLD WEATHER RULE



### ***Your Rights Under the Minnesota Cold Weather Rule***

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule, under statute 216B.097, protects residential utility customers during the cold winter months. Under this rule, your electric service will not be disconnected from October 15 through April 15 if you meet Cold Weather Rule requirements.

You must meet ALL the following conditions:

- You declare an inability to pay.
- Your total household, not individual, income is less than 50% of the state median income. You must provide the necessary documentation to support this condition.
- Your account is current for the billing period immediately prior to October 15. Or you mutually agree to a payment arrangement with the Stearns Electric Billing Department.

If you do not meet all of these listed conditions, then you do not qualify for the winter shut-off protection. However, you still can continue to receive electric service if you call us to make a mutually acceptable payment arrangement.

The law does allow for Stearns Electric Association to disconnect when it is necessary from October 15 to April 15, so please act promptly.

Stearns Electric Association works with members during the Cold Weather Rule period, just as we do throughout the year. We don't want to interrupt service to any member, but in a cooperative, all members suffer when any bill remains unpaid. Stearns Electric Association would rather work with members to establish and maintain adequate payment arrangements of their past due bill, but sometimes disconnection must be made when necessary, within the limits of the law.

## WHO CAN HELP?

***The following agencies  
might be able to help  
you pay energy bills:***

### **STEARNS/MORRISON COUNTY: TRI-CAP:**

(320) 251-1612  
(888) 765-5597

Salvation Army (HEATSHARE):  
(320) 257-7420

Stearns County Human Services:  
(320) 656-6000

Morrison County Human Services:  
(320) 632-2951

### **DOUGLAS/POPE COUNTIES:**

West Central MN  
Community Action, Inc.:  
(218) 685-4486  
(800) 492-4805

### **TODD COUNTY:**

Todd County Social Services:  
(320) 732-4516 or  
(888) 838-4066

### **KANDIYOHI COUNTY:**

Heartland Community  
Action Agency:  
(320) 235-0850  
(800) 992-1710

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **CAN MY HEAT BE DISCONNECTED IN THE WINTER?**

Yes, if your account is past due. To avoid a disconnection, you must make and keep an acceptable payment arrangement with your Cooperative to receive Cold Weather Rule (CWR) protection. This applies to all residential customers, including senior citizens and families with young children. If you make and keep a CWR payment arrangement, you are protected until April 15.

### **HOW DO I APPLY FOR THE COLD WEATHER RULE?**

Contact Stearns Electric Association and request a CWR payment arrangement.

### **WHAT IF I CAN'T MAKE MY SCHEDULED PAYMENT?**

Contact Stearns Electric to discuss a different arrangement. If you do not make your payments, your service may be shut off.

### **AM I ELIGIBLE FOR COLD WEATHER PROTECTION?**

1. If the combined income from all members in your household is:
  - At or below 50 percent of the state median income, you are not required to pay more than ten percent of your household income.
  - Above 50 percent of the state median, you can still make payment arrangements with your utility.
2. You declare an inability to pay. If you need a form please contact Stearns Electric Association's Billing Department.
3. Your account is current for the billing period immediately prior to October 15th or you enter into a payment arrangement and stay current.

***Please contact Stearns Electric Association, if you have any questions or for more information about the Cold Weather Rule or Energy Assistance Programs.***

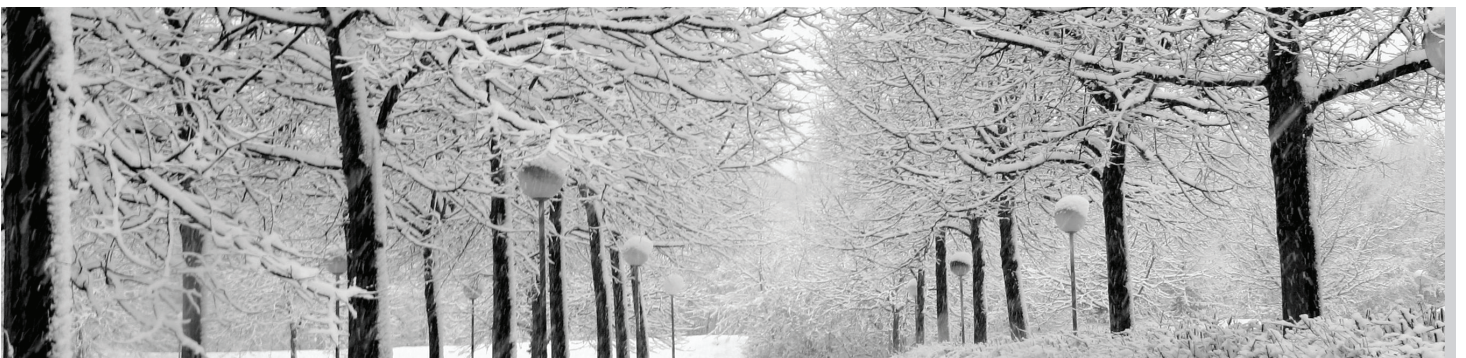


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The power of human connections®

**Call: (320) 256-4241 or (800) 962-0655**

**E-mail: [billing@stearnselectric.org](mailto:billing@stearnselectric.org)**

**Website: [www.stearnselectric.org](http://www.stearnselectric.org)**



*This brochure is for informational purposes only. Stearns Electric Association follows the 2015 Minnesota State Statute 216B.097 Cold Weather Rule; Cooperative or Municipal Utility.*