



MINNESOTA COLD WEATHER RULE

YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE MINNESOTA RULE



The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule (CWR), under statute (216B.097), protects residential utility customers during the cold winter months. Under this rule, your electric service will not be disconnected for nonpayment between October 1 and April 30 if electricity is the primary heat source in your residence and you meet Cold Weather Rule Requirements.

To qualify, you must meet ALL the following conditions:

- You declare an inability to pay by completing the “Inability to Pay” form.
- Your total household, not individual, income is at or below 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 1, or you mutually agree to a payment arrangement with the Stearns Electric member accounts department.

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

The law allows for Stearns Electric to disconnect when it is necessary from October 1 to April 30, so please act promptly. Before disconnecting electric

service during this time, Stearns Electric must provide:

- A 30-day notice of disconnection;
- A statement of members’ rights and responsibilities;
- A list of local energy assistance providers;
- Forms on which to request Cold Weather Rule protection; and
- A statement explaining available payment plans and other options to continue service.

To avoid a disconnection under the CWR, you must make and keep an acceptable payment arrangement with the Cooperative and meet all the conditions listed. 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 30.

Stearns Electric works closely with members during the CWR 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 would rather work with members to establish and maintain adequate payment arrangements of their past due bill, but sometimes a disconnection must take place.

Please contact Stearns Electric during regular business hours if you have any questions about the CWR or Energy Assistance Programs.



MINNESOTA COLD WEATHER RULE

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 Stearns Electric Association. 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 30.

HOW DO I APPLY FOR THE COLD WEATHER RULE?

Contact Stearns Electric 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 scheduled payments, your service may be shut off.

AM I ELIGIBLE FOR COLD WEATHER PROTECTION?

In order to be protected under the Cold Weather Rule, you must meet ALL of the following:

1. If the combined income from all members in your household is:
 - At or below 50% of the state median income, you are not required to pay more than ten (10) percent of your household income.
 - Above 50% 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's member accounts department.
3. Your account is current for the billing period immediately prior to October 1, or you enter into a payment arrangement with Stearns Electric and stay current.

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

WHO CAN HELP?

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

STEARNS/MORRISON COUNTIES:

Tri-CAP:
(320) 251-1612 | (888) 765-5597
Salvation Army (HEATSHARE):
(320) 252-4552
Stearns County Human Services:
(320) 656-6000
Morrison County Health and Human Services:
(800) 269-1464 | (320) 632-7800

DOUGLAS/POPE COUNTIES:

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

TODD COUNTY:

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

KANDIYOHI COUNTY:

United Community Action Partnership:
(320) 235-0850 | (800) 992-1710

(800) 962-0655 | BILLING @STEARNSELECTRIC.ORG | STEARNSELECTRIC.ORG

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