

## WHAT IS CWR?

CWR is the Cold Weather Rule. CWR can help you arrange payment plans with your utility to prevent your heat from being disconnected during the winter, between October 15 and April 15. The CWR is a Minnesota state law.

*“Bringing justice to sustainability.”*



The **Center for Earth, Energy, and Democracy** is a non-profit organization that works on energy and environmental justice.

[www.ceed.org](http://www.ceed.org)

# CWR

## Guide to the Cold Weather Rule



## Am I eligible for CWR?

You are eligible for CWR if you get your heat from electricity or natural gas.

## How do I get CWR benefits?

Contact your utility at any time to get CWR protection. If you receive a heat disconnect notice, contact them immediately over the phone.

## How do I contact my utility?

For Xcel, call 800-895-4999  
For CenterPoint, call 800-729-6164

For other utilities, you can find the customer contact phone number on your utility bill.

## Calling Your Utility:

- Have your account number on hand. The representative will look at your payment history and ask you some questions to understand why you need to make a payment plan.
- The representative may ask questions about the health of you and your family members and questions about your jobs to help determine the level of your payment plan.

- You can call your utility to find out if they are investor-owned.

**Investor-owned utilities**, like Xcel and CenterPoint, have to

**give payment plans to all heat-affected residential customers, regardless of income.**

- Investor-owned utility customers meeting the income requirements below do not have to pay more than 10% of household income.
- Municipal and cooperative utilities are only required to provide payment plans to customers meeting the income requirements.

Income Requirements, 2017

| Household Size | 3 Month Max, Annual Income | Guidelines |
|----------------|----------------------------|------------|
| 1              | \$24,541                   | \$6,135    |
| 2              | \$32,092                   | \$8,023    |
| 3              | \$39,643                   | \$9,910    |
| 4              | \$47,194                   | \$11,798   |
| 5              | \$54,745                   | \$13,686   |
| 6              | \$62,296                   | \$15,574   |
| 7              | \$63,712                   | \$15,928   |
| 8              | \$65,128                   | \$16,282   |
| 9              | \$66,544                   | \$16,636   |
| 10             | \$67,959                   | \$16,989   |

Source for Data Table: Minnesota Department of Commerce

## What if the payment plan doesn't work for me?

Ask your utility if they can provide a different payment option. If they say no, you can contact the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) for help (appeal), within the next ten days. Your heat will stay on during the appeal.

## How do I Appeal?

651-296-0406 or 1-800-657 3782

[https://mn.gov/puc/assets/Complaint%20Form%20September%202015\\_tcm14-63166.pdf](https://mn.gov/puc/assets/Complaint%20Form%20September%202015_tcm14-63166.pdf)

## What if I can't keep up with my payment plan?

Contact your utility provider immediately. Providers are not required to keep your heat on if you fall behind, so you must arrange a new plan with them. Your utility might tell you about other ways to get heating assistance if they can't give all the help you need.

## What other programs might help me?

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and associated programs like the Gas Affordability Program (GAP) and the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, "Shut-Off Protection," <https://mn.gov/puc/consumers/shut-off-protection.jsp>
- Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Email: [consumer.puc.state@mn.us](mailto:consumer.puc.state@mn.us)
- Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Phone Number: (651) 296-0406