

How to Keep your Lights and Gas Turned On

Do I have to pay my electric and gas bills? What if I cannot afford to pay?

Everyone must pay their utility bills every month. The electric and gas companies will shut off your service if you do not pay the bill.

Is there a way to lower my monthly bill?

There are ways you can try:

1. Call the company and ask about special payment programs (NUSTART or Matching Payment Programs)
2. Call 211 INFOLINE to ask about Energy Assistance, Operation Fuel or other agencies that may be able to help you.

Special Medical Protection

Can the gas or electric company turn off my service if my children are sick?

Generally, yes. The only time your service is protected is if the doctor says that shutting off of lights or gas would be "life threatening" to your child. In that case, the doctor can send a form to the utility company and they cannot shut you off. If the service is off, the company must turn it back on, even if you owe money.

Can I get protection if my child is under age two and just got out of the hospital?

If your child is under age two and just got discharged from the hospital, and your doctor feels that utility service is needed for the "health and well-being" of your child, the doctor can send a form to the utility company and they cannot turn your gas or electricity off. If the service is off, the company must turn it back on, even if you owe them money.



Hardship or Winter Protection

Can I get special protection if it's winter?

Electric

1. Call the company and tell them you want to apply for hardship or winter protection.
2. If you get hardship or winter protection, the electric company cannot shut you off between Nov.1 - May 1 even if you owe money.
3. If your electricity is off, the company must turn it back on as of Nov.1 even if you owe money.

Gas

1. Call the company and tell them you want to apply for hardship or winter protection.
2. This protection is from Nov.1 - May 1. If you get this protection and your gas is still on, the company can't turn you off even if you owe money.
3. If your gas is off, you must pay 20% of your back bill or \$100 to be turned back on.

Should I pay my monthly gas or electric bill if I have winter or hardship protection?

1. You will be billed every month for your gas and electric service even if you have this protection.
2. You should pay your bill every month. If you are behind on your bill after May 1, the company can shut off your service.

Questions?

Center for Children's Advocacy Medical-Legal Partnership Project

Attorney Bonnie Roswig
860-545-8581
broswig@ccmckids.org

Attorney Jay Sicklick
860-714-1412
jsicklick@kiddscounsel.org

kiddscounsel.org/mlpp

Attorney Alice Rosenthal
203-688-0113
arosenthal@kiddscounsel.org

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