

APPLICATION FOR ELECTRIC SHUT-OFF PROTECTION

READ THE NOTICE OF RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER RIGHTS AND POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE *BEFORE* COMPLETING THIS FORM

If you are unable to pay your entire bill and need to make special arrangements to spread out your payments, call Sioux Valley Energy Member Services Department at 1-877-511-8062 before the due date. This form does not need to be sent in to make a payment arrangement; simply call.

If you are unable to pay your entire bill and need cold weather protection from shut-off, fill out this form and return it to Sioux Valley Energy, immediately. If you do not meet the conditions stated on the Notice of Residential Customer Rights and Possible Assistance (printed on the back of this form), then you do not qualify for winter shut-off protection. However, you still can continue to receive electric service if you call us to make a mutually acceptable payment arrangement.

Fill out completely (please print) and send to PO Box 336, Pipestone MN 56164 or drop off at one of our service centers.

Minnesota Cold Weather Rule Application

Member Name:	Phone:
Address:	E-mail:
Account Number (From your electric bill):	Number of persons living full-time in household (including yourself):
Total Amount Owed: \$	Total Annual Household Income: \$
By signing this form, I hereby authorize any gas or electric utility that provides me service to exchange billing information. I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the enclosed "Notice of Residential Customer Rights and Possible Assistance." I attest that the above information is true and correct.	
Member Signature:	Date:

Call Sioux Valley Energy (1-877-511-8062)

within three days after the postmarked date on this notice to verify your status and to make any necessary payment arrangements.

Third Party Notice

The Third Party Notice is designed to notify the member and a third party, such as a friend, relative, church, or community agency, that a shut-off notice has been sent. The third party can receive and give information about the member and make payment arrangements with Sioux Valley Energy for the member. The third party is not responsible for payment. If you want a third party to be notified of the potential disconnection, please complete this form and return it to Sioux Valley Energy. *(This request cannot be accepted without the third party's signature.)*

Member Name:	Phone:
Account Number (From your electric bill):	Service Address:
Third Party Name	Third Party Phone:
Third Party Address:	
Third Party Signature: <i>(This request cannot be accepted without the third party's signature.)</i>	Date:
Sioux Valley Energy has my permission to provide information and accept information from the third party named above.	
Member Signature:	Date:

Sioux Valley Energy will make every effort to send a copy of the shut-off notice to the party specified. The member making the request understands that the electric utility is not liable should the third party fail to receive or act upon the notice.

Return this form and other documentation to Sioux Valley Energy immediately.

What do I have to do to be protected by this rule?

- Complete the form above and return it to Sioux Valley Energy by October 1 or as soon as you receive a disconnect notice while the cold weather rule is in effect.
- Provide documentation to Sioux Valley Energy that your total household income is at or less than 50 percent of the state median income. This information is included in your Income Tax Return. If you qualify for energy assistance through the Southwest MN Opportunity Council, this requirement has been satisfied.

Avoiding Disconnection:

The Cold Weather Rule does not forbid winter shut off. If you receive a shut off notice this winter, you must act promptly. Call Sioux Valley Energy to apply for Cold Weather Rule protection and set up a payment plan. Your service will be subject to disconnection without further notice if you do not make the agreed upon payments.

Reconnection:

When the Cold Weather Rule takes effect (October 1 to April 30), you can have your power reconnected by calling Sioux Valley Energy to set up a payment plan. You must keep your payment plan to avoid future disconnection.

3 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking for easy ways to lower your energy bills this winter? Here are a few tips from the Department of Energy:

- Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
- Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75% less energy.

Find More Energy Conservation Tips at www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/energy-efficiency-tools-0 or by scanning this QR Code:



NOTICE OF RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER RIGHTS AND POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE

READ CAREFULLY

The **Cold Weather Rule, Section 216B.097 of the Public Utilities Act**, provides that a cooperative electric association must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 1 and April 30 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

1. The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. A cooperative electric association utility may (i) verify income on forms it provides or (ii) obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income.
2. A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
3. A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.
4. An electric cooperative must between August 15 and October 1 each year, notify all residential customers of the provisions of this section.

The purpose of this notice is to inform you of your rights and responsibilities under the Cold Weather Rule. These rights and responsibilities are designed to help you meet winter utility bills. You must act **PROMPTLY!** If you choose not to assert your rights or choose not to enter into a mutually acceptable payment schedule, your service may be disconnected.

Specifically, the Cold Weather Rule and our policy provide you with these rights and responsibilities:

THE RIGHT to declare your inability to pay your utility bill. If you do so and if your household income is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income, your service affecting your primary heat source cannot be disconnected for nonpayment of your bill, provided that you enter into and make reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household. You must also receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills.

THE RESPONSIBILITY, if you choose to declare inability to pay, to complete the enclosed "Application for Electric Shut-Off Protection" form and return it to Sioux Valley Energy within five days.

THE RESPONSIBILITY to provide documentation to Sioux Valley Energy that your household income is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. Verification of income may be conducted by the local energy assistance provider or by Sioux Valley Energy.

THE RIGHT to a mutually acceptable payment schedule with Sioux Valley Energy. This payment schedule will cover your existing arrears plus the estimated usage during the payment schedule period. This may take the form of budget billing or a simple arrangement to pay so many dollars per month during the cold weather period with the remaining balance due on April 30. If you are able to pay but still wish to enter into a payment schedule, contact Sioux Valley Energy immediately to arrange a schedule.

Energy Assistance Programs and Weatherization Assistance Programs

If you need help paying your electric utility bill, you may qualify for state or federal fuel assistance. For complete qualification and application information, contact your local county welfare of community/citizen's action council listed below. These organizations may also provide weatherization programs and budget counseling.

- **Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Information Center** – (1-800-657-3710)
- **Pipestone County Veterans Administration** – (507-825-1171)
- **Rock County Veterans Administration** – (507-283-5061)
- **The Salvation Army Heatshare** – (1-800-842-7279)
- **Southwest Health & Human Services**
P.O. Box 715 • Luverne, MN 56156 (1-888-837-6713)
 - **Southwestern MN Opportunity Council**
P.O. Box 787 • Worthington, MN 56187
(1-800-658-2444)
 - **United Way 211** – (211)

THE RIGHT not to be involuntarily disconnected on a Friday unless you decline to enter into a payment agreement offered that day in person or via personal contact by telephone by Sioux Valley Energy. Involuntary disconnection must not occur on a weekend, holiday, day before a holiday; when utility offices are closed; or after the close of business on a day when disconnection is permitted, unless a field representative of the cooperative who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement, accept payment, and continue service, offers a payment agreement to the customer.

THE RIGHT not to be disconnected until at least 30 calendar days after the postmark date of the disconnect notice or until 15 calendar days after the disconnect notice has been personally delivered.

THE RIGHT before you are to be involuntarily disconnected, to appeal your disconnect notice to Sioux Valley Energy. Your service will not be disconnected until your appeal is resolved by Sioux Valley Energy.

THE RESPONSIBILITY, if you choose to appeal, to deliver or mail a personal letter of appeal stating your situation and issues in dispute. Your letter of appeal must be in our hands before the day of disconnection.

The Sioux Valley Energy appeal board will review your appeal within 10 days after it is received.

You must call the co-op for the date and time of the appeal review if you wish to be present.

Minnesota Military Personnel Shut-off Protection

Minnesota's electric military personnel law (Minnesota Statutes Chapter 325E.028) states that an electric cooperative cannot disconnect a residential consumer for non-payment if the following conditions are met:

- He or she has been issued orders into active duty, for deployment, or for a permanent change in duty station during the period of active duty, deployment, or change in duty station if such a residential customer:
- Has a household income below the state median household income or is receiving energy assistance and enters into an agreement with the electric cooperative under which the residential customer pays ten percent of the customer's gross monthly income toward the customer's bill and the residential customer remains reasonably current with those payments; or
- Has a household income above the state median household income and enters into an agreement with the electric cooperative establishing a reasonable payment schedule that considers the financial resources of the household and the residential customer remains reasonably current with payments under the payment schedule.
- The law provides for an appeals process if SVE and the customer are unable to agree on the establishment, reasonableness or modification of any payment schedule or on the reasonable timeliness of payments made. If the customer appeals, the law provides that his or her service will not be disconnected during the appeal process.