

New guideline to help ensure energy consumers can make informed decisions

The Essential Services Commission today published an [explicit informed consent guideline](#), to provide clarity for energy retailers and consumers about the commission's expectations.

The commission has clearly set out its expectations on Victoria's energy retailers and the rights of consumers to be properly informed in relation to their energy contracts and rights.

Commissioner Sitesh Bhojani said that to ensure consumer confidence and trust in the market Victorian energy consumers must be able to understand the plans that they are signing up to, and have the right to be properly informed of their options throughout their contract.

"These obligations are designed to ensure that consumers understand information about transactions being offered and clearly provide their consent if they wish to enter the transaction," he said.

"Explicit informed consent is critical for transparency in the energy market. It is important that consumers understand their energy plans and the ability of their retailers to change pricing.

"Information must be provided to customers in a way that is easy to understand and allows opportunities to ask about aspects of their energy plans that are most important to them."

The guideline sets out the general requirements that apply to obtaining explicit informed consent, as well as the requirements that apply to the specific types of transactions where explicit informed consent is mandatory under the code of practice.

The commission has a strong commitment to providing guidance and education to Victoria's energy industry and consumers about energy rights and entitlements.

Retailers that don't follow the rules may become subject to compliance and enforcement action, including litigation action. Since 2018 the commission has issued [penalty notices on seven occasions for code breaches relating to explicit informed consent](#), amounting to a total of \$4.6 million paid by energy retailers.

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