

Essential energy news



Key facts

Changes to the Victorian Retail Energy Code will come into full effect on 1 January 2019. Here are the top 10 changes designed to ensure all customers get fair and equitable access to assistance so that disconnection is only ever a measure of last resort.

	Before	After
1	Retailer decides who is a 'hardship customer' and therefore who gets assistance.	All residential customers facing payment difficulty are entitled to assistance.
2	Entry to hardship programs is subject to the retailer assessing a customer's capacity to pay.	Customers self-identify when they need assistance.
3	Retailer decides when to offer assistance to a customer.	Retailers must contact the customer within 21 business days of a missed payment to discuss the customer's entitlement to assistance.
4	Retailers determine what assistance they might offer to customers.	Customers propose payment arrangements they consider affordable. Retailers provide customers with information on different options.
5	Retailers determine how long a customer has to accept the retailer's offer of assistance.	Customers have six days to consider which option best meets their needs.
6	Retailers decide what they take into account when offering assistance.	When assisting a customer, retailers must take into account all the customer circumstances known to them.
7	Retailers decide when to issue a reminder notice when a bill hasn't been paid.	Reminder notices must be issued within 21 business days.
8	A retailer can disconnect a customer if they fail two payment plans (two strikes).	Retailers must continue to assist customers as long as the customer is taking reasonable action to pay for their energy and repay their arrears.
9	A retailer cannot disconnect a customer unless the customer owes \$120 or more.	A retailer cannot disconnect a customer unless the customer owes \$300 or more.
10	Rules based regulation where a retailer can disconnect a customer provided the retailer has merely followed the rules.	Outcome based regulation where a retailer can only disconnect a customer for non-payment as a measure of last resort.

For more detail on the new payment difficulty framework or the new standards, go to www.esc.vic.gov.au/paymentdifficulties

Contact us

Call us on + 61 3 9032 1300 or 1300 664 969 during business hours or complete the online enquiry form: www.esc.vic.gov.au/contact-us