



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **State Moratorium on Utility Disconnections During COVID-19 to End July 25**

*State emergency energy assistance available*

MADISON - On Thursday, the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) voted unanimously to lift the temporary moratorium on utility disconnections for nonpayment during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The move comes as the state continues to reopen and nearly a month after the state Supreme Court struck down *Safer at Home*. The PSC strongly encourages customers behind on payments to arrange for a payment plan, or apply for assistance.

"As our state's businesses reopen and people return to work by following the steps in the Badger Bounce Back plan, we must calibrate consumer protections with costs to all utility customers. The longer deferral of payments are allowed, the more it will impact utility bills for everyone. Our actions today will ensure that those who are able to pay will continue do so, and those who are struggling can seek a payment plan or apply for energy assistance," said Rebecca Cameron Valcq, Chairperson of the PSC. "When working out payment plans with customers, I strongly encourage utilities to provide extra flexibility for those whose lives and employment continue to be severely impacted by this disease."

To avoid disconnection, customers who have fallen behind on payments are encouraged to first contact their utility to set up a payment plan. Contact information for the largest utilities in Wisconsin is listed below:

- Alliant Energy 1-800-255-4268
- Madison Gas & Electric 1-800-245-1125
- Superior Water, Light & Power 1-800-227-7957
- We Energies 1-800-842-4565
- Wisconsin Public Service Corporation 1-800-450-7260
- Xcel Energy 1-800-895-4999

If customers cannot reach an agreement with their utility, they may contact the PSC by calling 1-800-225-7729, or by [filing a complaint on the PSC website](#).

For more information about utility disconnections and collections, see the [PSC's fact sheet on residential customer rights](#).

If a customer is having difficulty paying their energy bill or receives a disconnection notice, they may be eligible for assistance from the Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP). To determine eligibility or find out where to apply for assistance, go to <http://homeenergyplus.wi.gov/> or call 1-866-HEATWIS."

If full payment or a payment plan cannot be agreed on, utilities will be allowed to send disconnection notices starting July 15. Customers who have a medical condition or are infected and sick with COVID-19 can still avoid disconnection with a temporary waiver from their utility.

Additionally, the PSC voted to allow utilities to commence charging late payment fees on debts incurred after July 15, refuse service for failure to provide documentation to prove identity and residency after July 25, and allow utilities to require a cash deposit as a condition of new service starting July 31.

On March 23, 2020, Governor Tony Evers and Andrea Palm, Secretary-designee of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, ordered residents in the state to stay at home except when performing essential activities or accessing essential services.

In response to Governor Evers' initial *Safer at Home* order, the PSC met on March 24 and ordered that:

- No public utility may disconnect or refuse service to any customer for nonpayment;
- No public utility may refuse service to a new customer for failure to provide documentation to prove identity and residency;
- Every public utility shall offer to any customer a deferred payment agreement;
- No public utility may assess upon any customer any fee or charge for late payment; and
- No public utility may require a cash deposit or other guarantee as a condition of new service.

On May 13, 2020, the Wisconsin Supreme Court struck down *Safer at Home*, ending measures put in place to manage the spread of COVID-19. The utility disconnection moratorium, however, remained in place.

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