

Suggested citation if referencing the below information: Sanya Carley and David Konisky, 2024, "Utility Disconnections Dashboard," Energy Justice Lab.



## Virginia

Last updated: November 05, 2024

Covered utilities: These policies pertain to electricity customers who receive their service from an investor-owned utility or an electric cooperative in the State of Virginia. Customers that receive service from a municipal utility are not covered by these policies.

20 VAC 5-330-10; Va. Code Ann. § 56-232

### Weather Protections

No electric utility shall disconnect from service any residential customer for the nonpayment of bills or fees when the forecasted temperature low is at or below 32 degrees Fahrenheit within the 24 hours following the scheduled disconnection or when the forecasted temperature is at or above 92 degrees Fahrenheit within the 24 hours following the scheduled disconnection.

In addition, no utilities shall disconnect from service any residential customer for nonpayment of bills or fees on Fridays, weekends, state holidays, or the day immediately preceding a state holiday.

21 VAC 15.2-2121.2A

### Medical Protections

Disconnections will be delayed for up to 30 days if a residential customer has a physical or psychiatric condition that requires medical intervention to prevent further disability, loss of function, or death. Medical certificates can be issued by licensed physicians (licensed to practice medicine or osteopathic medicine in any state). This protection can be renewed one time per customer.

Medical certificates must include an identification of the medical condition, a certification by a licensed physician that the medical condition meets the definition of a serious medical condition, the anticipated length of time that the serious medical condition will persist, and any equipment prescribed, or treatment required for the medical condition.

In addition, a utility will delay a disconnection for up to 10 days if the customer notifies the utility that they intend to obtain a medical certificate.

20 VAC 5-330-20; 20 VAC 5-330-30; 20 VAC 5-330-40

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### Other Customer Protections

There are no specific protections for households with children, elderly residents, individuals with disabilities, or military personnel.

### General Exemptions

Customers and utilities can request an exemption from the rules for reasons of hardship.

20 VAC 5-330-30

### Notification Requirements

Written notification of at least 10 days is required from a utility before a customer may be disconnected. In-person or telephone notifications are not required, and a utility is not required to delay a disconnection if it is unable to reach a customer by a telephone call or an in-person visit.

Each utility is required to deliver notice of nonpayment of bills or fees to its residential customers prior to disconnection by using at least one of the following methods: (i) mail, (ii) email, (iii) text message, (iv) phone call, or (v) door hanger.

20 VAC 5-312-90; Va. Code Ann. § 56-247.1; 21 VAC 15.2-2121.3C

### Payment Information, Delinquency, and Fee Information

There are no minimum arrearages before a utility may disconnect a customer.

Customer may be charged fees associated with a disconnection or a reconnection. No electric utility shall require a deposit of more than 25 percent of the arrearage amount for service, exclusive of nonpayment fees, penalties, or interest, in order to restore service to any residential customer where such utility received funding from the Department of Social Services for such customer through the Home Energy Assistance Program pursuant to § 63.2-805 within the last 12 months. A customer is eligible for this provision once every three years.

Utilities may provide customers with payment plans.

Utility disconnections due to the nonpayment of bills or fees are prohibited for residential customers until the customer's account is 45 days in arrears.

Va. Code Ann. § 56-247.1; 20 VAC 5-330-40; 21 VAC 15.2-2121.3C; 21 VAC 15.2-2121.3D

### Landlords and Tenants

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No specific protections for tenants when the landlord of a housing unit is the account holder.

#### Availability of Protection Policies

Utilities are required to provide to each of their residential customers a copy of its disconnection for nonpayment policy (i) at any time a new residential account is established, (ii) when any disconnection for nonpayment of bills or fees is scheduled by including a copy of the policy with such notice, or (iii) by publishing the disconnection policy on the utility's website. Each such utility shall provide all required notices in English and Spanish. Such required notices shall include information regarding payment plans and state, federal, or utility energy assistance programs.

21 VAC 15.2-2121.3A