

Suggested citation if referencing the below information: Sanya Carley and David Konisky, 2023, “Utility Disconnections Dashboard,” Energy Justice Lab.



Maryland

Last updated: December 18, 2023

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

MD Code, Public Utilities, § 2-112 and COMAR 20.31.01.01

Weather Protections

Customers may not be disconnected from their utility service if the weather forecast for the next 72 hours has at least one 24-hour period where the temperature falls below 32 degrees F. Service may not be terminated between November 1st and March 31st, unless the utility notified the Commission by an affidavit filed at least 24 hours prior to the disconnection that termination of service would not create a threat to the life or health of anyone in the household. The affidavit must state whether a customer claims an occupant is elderly, disabled, seriously ill or dependent upon life support equipment.

The amount of the arrearage during winter must be greater than \$200 for a single service utility or \$300 for a dual service utility and greater than the customer’s deposit before service can be terminated.

Additionally, customers may not be disconnected if temperatures rise above 95 degrees F for at least one full day in a 3-day forecast during times of hot weather.

COMAR 20.31.01.02; COMAR 20.31.03.03; COMAR 20.31.03.04

Medical Protections

Customers with medical conditions will have disconnections delayed for up to 30 days if termination of service would aggravate a serious illness or prevent the use of life-support equipment. Medical certificates can be issued by a licensed physician, certified nurse practitioner, or a physician’s assistant.

If customers receive medical condition protections, they must enter into a payment agreement with their utility. Utilities will not delay shutoffs if customer notifies their utility that they intend to obtain a medical certificate.

COMAR 20.31.03.01; COMAR 20.31.01.02

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Other Customer Protections

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

General Exemptions

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

COMAR 20.31.01.01

Notification Requirements

Written notification of at least 14 days is required from a utility before a customer may be disconnected. In-person or telephone notifications are required as well. 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.

COMAR 20.31.03.01; COMAR 20.31.03.02; COMAR 20.31.03.0; COMAR 20.31.02.05

Payment Information, Delinquency, and Fee Information

Customers have 20 days to pay their bills before they are considered past-due.

The amount of the arrearage during winter must be greater than \$200 for a single service utility or \$300 for a dual service utility and greater than the customer’s deposit before service can be terminated. During the remainder of the year, a customer may not be disconnected if the arrearage is less than \$100 and has been delinquent for less than 3 months.

Customer may be charged fees associated with a disconnection or a reconnection.

Utilities may provide customers with payment plans.

COMAR 20.31.02.01; COMAR 20.31.03.03; COMAR 20.31.02.05; COMAR 20.31.02.06

Landlords and Tenants

Medical certificates issued for customers at master-metered buildings will be good for 30 days and can be renewed just once.

COMAR 20.31.03.06, MD Code, Public Utilities, § 7-309, COMAR 20.31.01.02

Availability of Protection Policies

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Utilities and public utility commissions are required to provide information on available sources of financial assistance. Additionally, disconnection notices will include information on customer protections. These protections must be sent out by mail to all customers at least once annually as well.

COMAR 20.31.03.02, COMAR 20.31.03.03, COMAR 20.31.03.01