

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



Texas

Last updated: January 30, 2023

Covered utilities: These policies apply to all electric utilities that provide retail electric utility service in Texas, with the exception of municipal utilities.

16 TAC § 25.21

Weather Protections

An electric utility cannot disconnect a customer anywhere in its service territory on a day when the previous day's highest temperature did not exceed 32 degrees Fahrenheit, and the temperature is predicted to remain at or below that level for the next 24 hours, according to the nearest National Weather Service (NWS) reports; or the NWS issues a heat advisory for any county in the electric utility's service territory, or when such advisory has been issued on any one of the preceding two calendar days.

16 TAC § 25.29(i)

Medical Protections

No electric utility may disconnect service at a permanent, individually metered dwelling unit of a delinquent customer when that customer establishes that disconnection of service will cause some person residing at that residence to become seriously ill or more seriously ill. Each time a customer seeks to avoid disconnection of service using a medical protection, the customer must accomplish all of the following by the stated date of disconnection: (1) have the person's attending physician (for purposes of this subsection, the term "physician" shall mean any public health official, including medical doctors, doctors of osteopathy, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and any other similar public health official) call or contact the electric utility by the stated date of disconnection; (2) have the person's attending physician submit a written statement to the electric utility; and (3) enter into a deferred payment plan.

The prohibition against service termination provided by a medical protection shall last 63 days from the issuance of the electric utility bill or a shorter period agreed upon by the electric utility and the customer or physician.

16 TAC § 25.29(g)

Other Customer Protections

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

General Exemptions

None specified.

Notification Requirements

Customers must be given at least 10 days of written notice before their disconnection. Notice by telephone or in-person visit is not required.

16 TAC 25.29 (k)

Payment Information, Delinquency, and Fee Information

Customers must be given at least 16 days to pay their bills. A bill will be considered late if it is not paid by its due date.

There is no minimum arrearage requirement before disconnection.

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

Payment plans are available to customers.

16 TAC 25.28

Landlords and Tenants

Tenants of master-metered apartment buildings, where the landlord is the customer, must receive 4 days of notice before disconnection. The electric utility shall post a minimum of five notices in conspicuous areas in the corridors or other public places of the apartment complex.

16 TAC § 25.29(j)

Availability of Protection Policies

Utilities are required to send informational packets on customer rights to customers at least every other year by mail. Utilities are required to provide information to customers on available sources of financial assistance.

16 TAC § 25.31