

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



Michigan

Last updated: December 18, 2023

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 Michigan. Customers that receive service from a municipal utility are not covered by these policies.

M.C.L.A. 460.6 and 460.6d

Weather Protections

Elderly customers, aged 65 or older, may not be disconnected from their utility service between November 1st and March 31st. There are no specific protections that limit disconnections during times of hot weather.

However, each utility must have an extreme weather condition policy, approved by the commission. The policy must include suspended disconnection during extreme hot and cold weather. The utility must notify the commission of any preferential treatment it gives to different groups of customers in its extreme weather policy.

Mich. Admin. Code R 460.132; Mich. Admin. Code R 460.102a; Mich. Admin. Code R 460.102; Mich. Admin. Code

Medical Protections

Customers will have their disconnections delayed initially for up to 21 days if they or someone in their household has existing medical condition. The customer must give the utility a commission-approved medical certificate that includes information on the medical condition, any medical equipment required for the emergency, and the specific time period during which shutoff would aggravate the emergency.

Medical certificates can be provided by a physician or public health official. This protection can be renewed twice. Utilities will delay shutoffs for 3 business days if the customer notifies the utility that they intend to obtain a medical certificate.

A “critical care customer” means any customer who requires, or has a household member who requires, home medical equipment or a life support system, and who, on an annual basis, provides a commission-approved medical certification form from a physician or medical facility to the utility identifying the medical equipment or life support system and certifying that an interruption of service would be immediately life-threatening. A utility shall not shut off service

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to a “critical care customer” due to inability to pay if shut off would be immediately life threatening. Critical care customers must give the utility a medical certificate form on an annual basis showing their status as a critical care customer. If that status ends, the customer must notify the utility of the change. If initially notified without a certificate, the utility will postpone shutoff for 3 business days to allow the customer to obtain a medical certificate. The utility will maintain a special file on all critical care customers. These customers will receive service so long as they remain critical care customers and their inability to pay continues.

Mich. Admin. Code R 460.102a; Mich. Admin. Code R 460.130

Other Customer Protections

Military protections apply to customers (and their spouses) that are on full-time active-duty orders, are deployed overseas responding to hostilities (or within the US in response to a declared national or state emergency), and the household income is reduced as a result. These customers must notify the utility of their status and provide verification if the utility requests it. Utility shall not shut off service to military customers for 90 days. The utility must renew this protection for at least 1 additional 90-day period if the customer continues to meet eligible military customer conditions and requests that the utility does so.

There are no specific protections for households with children or individuals with disabilities.

Mich. Admin. Code R 460.102; Mich. Admin. Code R 460.133

General Exemptions

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

Mich. Admin. Code R 460.101a

Notification Requirements

Written notification of at least 10 days is required from a utility before a customer may be disconnected. In-person notifications are not required but notice by telephone is required. 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.

Mich. Admin. Code R 460.139

Payment Information, Delinquency, and Fee Information

Customers have 21 days to pay their bills, and an account becomes delinquent if bills are unpaid 5 or more days after the due date.

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

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

Utilities may provide customers with payment plans.

Mich. Admin. Code R 460.120; Mich. Admin. Code R 460.141; Mich. Admin. Code R 460.123; Mich. Admin. Code R 460.3409

Landlords and Tenants

For tenants of a single-metered dwelling that accommodates three or more households, each dwelling unit must receive at least 30 days of notice that the landlord has failed to pay the bill and shutoff has been scheduled.

Mich. Admin. Code R 460.139

Availability of Protection Policies

At least once each year, the utility shall inform all customers of medical, winter, and military protections, as well as available federal and state energy assistance programs. These protections shall all be posted on the utility's website. Disconnection notices shall also include information on protections available to customers as well.

Mich. Admin. Code R 460.129; Mich. Admin. Code R 460.140