

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



Oregon

Last updated: January 30, 2023

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

ORS 756.010, 756.040, 757.005, and 757.006; OAR 860-021-0008 and 860-021-0000

Weather Protections

An energy utility cannot terminate service for nonpayment on any day where the high temperature forecasted is less than 32 degrees Fahrenheit. (This rule does not apply if an energy utility instead offers a commission-approved winter protection program.) An electric utility cannot disconnect service for nonpayment any day a local Heat Advisory is issued.

OAR 860-021-0407

Medical Protections

A medical condition exists in Oregon if disconnection would significantly endanger the physical health of the customer or a member of the customer’s household. If there is a medical condition, disconnection will be delayed for the expected time length of the medical problem, but no more than six months (or up to 12 months for chronic illnesses). A medical certificate for the condition is required and can be provided by a licensed physician, nurse-practitioner, or physician’s assistant authorized to diagnose and treat the medical condition described without direct supervision by a physician. The certificate shall include details such as a complete description of the health conditions; an explanation of how the person’s health will be significantly endangered by terminating the service; a statement indicating how long the health condition is expected to last; and a statement specifying the particular type of utility service required (for example, electricity for respirator). Renewal of a medical certificate is possible. Customers seeking protection from disconnection for a medical condition are required to enter into a payment agreement.

OAR 860-021-0410

Other Customer Protections

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

General Exemptions

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Upon request or its own motion, the Commission may waive any of these rules for good cause shown. A request for a waiver must be made in writing, unless otherwise allowed by the Commission.

OAR 860-021-0005

Notification Requirements

Customers must be given at least 15 days of notice before their disconnection. Written, In-person and telephone notifications are all required in at least some circumstances. If the utility contacts a customer for disconnection by phone or in person, and a reasonable person would conclude that the customer does not understand the consequences of disconnection, the utility must delay disconnection another 5 business days.

OAR 860-021-0405

Payment Information, Delinquency, and Fee Information

Customers are given 15 days to pay their bills. The bill will become late if it is not paid within this period.

There is no minimum arrearage requirement before disconnection can occur.

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

Payment plans are available to customers.

OAR 860-021-0125, OAR 860-021-0328, and OAR 860-021-0410

Landlords and Tenants

Tenants, if the landlord is listed as the customer, must receive 5 days of notice before a disconnection can take place.

OAR 860-021-0326

Availability of Protection Policies

A list of customer protections shall be provided with the disconnection notice. Utilities are required to provide information on available sources of financial assistance.

OAR 860-021-0405