

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



## Oklahoma

Last updated: November 26, 2023

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

17 Okl. St. § 151 and 152, Okla. Admin. Code 165:35-1-3

### Weather Protections

There shall be no disconnections if the National Weather Service issues a local forecast predicting the temperature will drop below 32 degrees Fahrenheit at any time during the following 24 hours.

Disconnections are also prohibited on days that the forecast predicts a temperature of 101 degrees Fahrenheit or more, or the actual heat index reaches 101 degrees or more.

In addition, the commission can order a temporary ban on any and all disconnections during periods of extremely severe weather, or when circumstances exist that disconnection could create a situation dangerous to the life or health of consumers or to property.

Okla. Admin. Code 165:35-21-10

### Medical Protections

Discontinuance of service must be suspended if the consumer notifies the utility that disconnection of service will give rise to a life-threatening condition for a permanent resident of the household should electric service be terminated. A life-threatening situation is defined as one where the consumer or other permanent resident of the household is dependent upon equipment that is prescribed by a physician, operates on electricity, and is needed to sustain the person's life. The consumer must return the utility's medical certificate form (or a document containing essentially the same information) signed by a licensed medical doctor or osteopath within thirty days of notification. The certificate will verify the existence of a life-threatening situation. It must specify details such as the effect that discontinuance of electric service might have upon the health of the impaired individual and any electric-operated equipment necessitated by the medical problem. The nature of the medical problem and expected duration should also be listed. The customer may request that the initial 30-day period be extended by the utility for an additional 30 days, but only if necessitated by the life-threatening condition. The utility is not required to furnish service to the consumer beyond a

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total of sixty calendar days for the life-threatening condition without full payment of the account. Customers that receive medical protections are not required to enter into a payment agreement.

Okla. Admin. Code 165:35-21-10(f) and 165:35 Appendix A

#### Other Customer Protections

Elderly customers are those age 65 or older. Disconnection can be delayed for five additional business days for elderly customers if the customer requests that the Commission's Consumer Services Division intervenes on their behalf.

Disabled customers are those that have a permanent impairment which substantially limits their ability to pay for utility service. Disconnection can be delayed for disabled customers for five additional business days if the customer requests that the Commission's Consumer Services Division intervenes on their behalf.

There are no specific protections for households with children or military personnel.

Okla. Admin. Code 165:35-21-11 and 165:35-19-2

#### General Exemptions

Whenever compliance with any provision or requirement of this Chapter would be unduly burdensome, or cause an unreasonable hardship or an excessive expense, or result in an unusual difficulty, or for other good cause shown the Commission may, upon application of the utility or the consumer and after notice and hearing, suspend or excuse compliance therewith or make such other requirements as it shall deem appropriate.

Okla. Admin. Code 165:35-1-3

#### Notification Requirements

Customers must be given at least 10 days of written notice before their disconnection. In-person and telephone notifications are not required.

Okla. Admin. Code 165:35-21-20

#### Payment Information, Delinquency, and Fee Information

Customers are given 20 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.

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

Payment plans are available to customers.

Okla. Admin. Code 165:35-19-32 and 165:35-21-10

### Landlords and Tenants

Tenants, if the landlord is listed as the customer, shall still receive the same protections as other customers.

Okla. Admin. Code 165:35-21-20

### Availability of Protection Policies

A list of customer protections shall be provided with the disconnection notice. Utilities are not required to provide information on available sources of financial assistance.

Okla. Admin. Code 165:35-21-20 and 165:35-21-3