

Effective from 1st July 2021.

Comtricity Consumer Care Policy

This document is our Consumer Care Policy. Our Consumer Care Policy is aligned to achieve, or take alternative actions to achieve, the purpose and outcomes outlined in the Electricity Authority Consumer Care Guidelines and is a guide to how we can work together to help you as a consumer. It contains helpful advice, our contact details, and explains how we will:

- Act to make sure we have a good relationship with you.
- Give you the best chance to afford the electricity you need.
- Help to minimise the harm caused by not having enough electricity or not being able to pay your bill.

It tells you where you can find the extra support you might need and how we can help, including if your health depends on electricity.

This Consumer Care Policy is one of several documents explaining the relationship between you, the consumer, and us, your electricity retailer. The other documents are our contract for electricity supply and our standard terms and conditions.

If you are in financial hardship or having trouble paying your bills, let us know how we can support you.

We're here for you

We recognise that electricity supply makes an essential contribution to you and your whānau's wellbeing and we are committed to making sure:

- We supply you with the electricity you need to live your life.
- You are treated with care and respect in every interaction with us.
- We communicate with you in an understandable, timely and clear fashion.
- We strive to adapt our communications based on your need.
- You have every opportunity to be on the best pricing plan to meet your needs.
- We understand your situation and are proactive in offering assistance.
- We work with you in a mutually respectful, collaborative and constructive manner to solve problems.

- We work with you to resolve payment difficulties and, with your permission, can link you to one or more support agencies or social agencies to assist you.
- We work with you to try to keep your electricity connected if you are having payment difficulties. We view the disconnection of electricity for non-payment of bills as a last resort. We will work with you to try and keep your electricity connected and avoid building up debt.
- We learn from our experiences to continually improve our support processes.
- We can tell you about your electricity consumption to help you make decisions about which pricing plan suits you.
- If you use electricity from us, we will communicate with you clearly about your rights and the choices you can make, even if you have not signed up with us yet.

What you can expect from us

We will help you by making it as easy as possible to pay for the electricity you use.

We offer standard terms and conditions to all our customers. You agree to these when you become a customer and consume electricity from us. All our contracts meet the Electricity Authority's good contracting principles and minimum terms and conditions. These terms and conditions are updated from time to time and you can read the latest version on our website.

You also have access to complaint resolution through the Utilities Disputes process and support under the Electricity Authority's Consumer Care Guidelines. As a responsible electricity retailer, we work within these guidelines, and we are always looking for ways to improve our service to you.

You can find the Consumer Care Guidelines on the Authority's website: www.ea.govt.nz/consumer-care

What we expect from you

As an electricity consumer, you have a set of rights and responsibilities.

We ask that you:

- Pay for the electricity you use.

- Reply to messages we send you, so we can know more about your situation and provide additional help if required.
- Work with us positively, the more we work together the more we can help you.
- If you are in financial hardship or having trouble paying your bills, let us know how we can help you.
- Even if you have had problems with your electricity retailer in the past, still contact us so we can help you.

Commitment to inclusion

We are an inclusive electricity provider, and we work to make sure that all our customers have access to the support we offer regardless of language, ethnicity, educational achievement, culture, gender, physical and intellectual ability, age, health, income, and wealth.

We offer all our customers a variety of support options, including payment plans, to help make electricity more affordable for you.

Joining us

You can join us by completing the online application form on our website. You can find information about our products, services, and pricing plans on our website. We have stated our pricing, fees, and contract terms clearly to help you make an informed decision.

Becoming a customer means agreeing to us supplying you with electricity, agreeing to our electricity plan, and agreeing to our terms and conditions.

Before you become a customer, we will ask you questions about yourself and your situation. As part of our join process, we will check whether you are a medically dependent customer. If you are then we will be in contact to discuss your best options. If we think there is another electricity retailer or a better option for you, we will tell you about them. If we decide not to enter a customer contract with you for electricity retailer we can advise you on what you can do, including referring you to support services.

Using electricity smartly

We want to help you keep your home healthy and warm. We can offer you advice on how to use your electricity in a way that saves you money. There may be simple changes you can make to your home and the way you use electricity to keep it warm in winter and cool in summer, and keep your energy costs down.

For more energy-saving tips, visit these websites:

- www.energymate.nz/tips
- www.genless.govt.nz/living/lower-energy-homes/

We also recommend talking with someone in your community who can provide energy efficiency and healthy homes advice. This advice could be over the phone or an in-home visit. You can find a group near you here: www.communityenergy.org.nz

If you are limiting the amount of electricity you use in order to pay your bills, for example if you are not using your heater enough during cold weather, please contact us for help.

Communicating clearly

We value our relationship with you. We want to provide you with understandable, timely, clear, and accessible communications.

You can choose the best option for how and when we communicate with you based on your needs.

If you need someone to act on your behalf

You can provide us with an alternate contact or an authorised person such as a family member, friend, support person or community worker.

Please always ensure that your alternate contact has agreed to fulfil the role. Once they have agreed, let us know their contact details and whether they are the first point of contact for your account or whether we should only contact them if you are unavailable.

Once this is settled, we will work with your alternate contact to make sure that you understand what is happening with your electricity bills and what payments you need to make.

We will inform you if your nominated alternate contact or authorised person reaches out to us to let us know that they no longer wish to act in this capacity.

Managing your account

You can check how much energy you are using, plus other information about your account online anytime. This can help you make decisions about your energy use. You are also able to update your details using your online account.

If something in your account or on your bill doesn't look right then please contact us and we will work to resolve the issue as soon as possible.

You are entitled to access the personal information we hold about you, and request that we amend it if it is incorrect. You may request to view, correct or update the personal information we hold about you by emailing us at contact@comtricity.nz.

Difficulties paying your bill

If we notice that you haven't paid your bill then we will reach out to check that everything is ok. If you are finding it hard to pay your electricity bill, we're here to help. Please contact us to discuss your payment options. We are committed to working with you to help manage your payments if you are having difficulties.

If you have an outstanding balance on your account, we can help you set up a repayment plan that suits you. We will monitor your payments to check your repayment plan is working well. We may contact you if we think there is a better way for you to set it up.

We will not disconnect your electricity if you are on a payment plan and making the agreed payments.

Linking you with financial mentoring and support organisations

We can help you if your family or household needs a bit of extra support.

We have relationships with different people and organisations in your community that offer financial mentoring and money advice. They can help you work out how best to pay your bills as well as supporting you with other issues your family or household might have.

The following social agencies may be able to provide free support and budgeting advice:

- You can contact Work and Income on 0800 559 009.

- You can contact the Citizens Advice Bureau on 0800 FOR CAB (0800 367 222).

If you agree, we can connect you with one of these support people who will help you. Once contact is made, we will give you some time to talk to the agency and receive help without disconnecting your electricity supply if you are having trouble paying your bills.

We will work with you and your support organisation as a partnership, making sure we all use agreed ways of communicating with each other.

Fees and bonds

You are responsible for paying any charges from the date of your switch over to us or from the first time that you use energy that is supplied by us. All rates and other charges and fees are clearly stated on our website when you join us and on your bills. We offer direct debit (with a weekly invoice fee of \$1.05). We do not take any bonds.

You may also be charged for any third-party contractor services performed at your property. We won't charge you a fee without giving you notice and telling you the reason for it. We will also let you know if there is something you can do to avoid being charged the fee.

Medically dependent customers and vulnerable customers

The health and wellbeing of our consumers is very important to us.

Some people, known as medically dependent consumers or ~~MDCs~~ rely on electricity to prevent serious harm to their health. This could be because a health practitioner has supplied or prescribed medical equipment that requires a constant electricity supply.

Contact your doctor (General Practitioner or ~~GP~~) and talk through your situation with them if you think that electricity is particularly important for the health of you or someone in your household, or if you are unsure about this.

If you or someone at your property is dependent on mains electricity for critical medical support (a ~~medically dependent consumer~~) such that the loss of electricity may result in loss of life or serious harm to you or that dependent person, you must let us know by ticking the relevant box on your profile page or contacting us as soon as your situation has changed.

We will comply with the Electricity Authority's Guideline on Arrangements to Assist Medically Dependent Consumers once you have notified us of your medically dependent consumer status. We will ask if this applies to you when you first sign up. You must notify us if you, or another person at your property, cease to be a medically dependent consumer.

When you are prescribed or supplied critical electrical medical equipment, you should be provided with a Notice of Potential Medically Dependent Consumer Status by your District Health Board, private hospital or General Practitioner. We may require you to confirm this notice. Please keep it somewhere safe. We also acknowledge that non-medical specific equipment can also be depended on by medically dependent consumers - such as microwaves, so not all medically dependent consumers may have such notices.

We cannot guarantee the electricity supply to your house. Therefore, you must maintain a back-up power supply to ensure the medically dependent consumer's health and safety during an outage. It is important that you contact emergency services or get the medically dependent consumer to a medical facility if you feel that the health of the medically dependent consumer is at risk during an outage.

You may be a vulnerable customer if you have told us or it appears to us that disconnection of electricity from your property would present a clear threat to your or a member of your household's health or well-being and/or you have genuine difficulty in paying your bill because of severe financial difficulty, whether temporary or permanent.

If, for any reason, we form the honest belief that you are a vulnerable or medically dependent customer, you authorise us to consult with appropriate government authorities or agencies, private health providers or any other social agency or service provider as necessary.

For more information on preparing an emergency response plan for your household: www.eranz.org.nz/medically-dependant

Your electricity supply

The electricity you use relies on many businesses for generating the electricity and getting it to your home.

Each electricity bill you receive from us goes towards paying these businesses for this generation, transmission, distribution, and metering, as

well as what we do as your retailer.

Normally, we will take care of everything for you. However, from time to time you may receive a notice directly from your electricity network or local lines company about planned electricity outages in your area. This is when they turn off the electricity to your home for a set period of time to do maintenance work or upgrade the wires.

Sometimes things go wrong and there is no power in your home. We can help you work out what the problem is and who is best to fix it - for example, if there is a problem with the electricity supply in your neighbourhood.

If you have lost power to your home, please contact us.

Disconnections & reconnections

We work hard to make electricity as affordable for our customers as possible. We will strive to keep you connected and view disconnections as our worst-case scenario. We will not disconnect customers in cases where you are a vulnerable customer and not all assistance has been provided to you, or you if are a medically dependent customer.

Even if you have had payment issues with us in the past, contact us so we can find the best possible repayment plan for you and your current circumstances.

We can refer you to support services and financial mentoring in your community if you are not comfortable talking to us directly. Please refer to our [linking you with support organisations to help you with money difficulties](#) section for further information on how we can help you.

If you do not pay a bill on its due date, we will attempt to communicate with you directly and/or through the alternative contact you have chosen. Please engage with us so we can support you.

What communications you can expect from us

We want you to know what is happening with your account, so we will attempt to communicate with you a number of times about an unpaid bill. Our aim is to let you know about your rights and obligations, and support you to use the electricity you need.

We will attempt to communicate with you using more than one method and

using your alternative contact if you have provided us with one. We will also contact you at different times of the day to try to make it easier for you.

If we contact you, please respond so we can make payment arrangements and avoid proceeding to disconnection.

You can expect the following communications from us regarding an unpaid bill:

1. An invoice email that tells you the amount due and the due date with a reminder that the total unpaid amount will be added to your next week's bill.
2. A reminder in notice a week later if the due date is missed.
3. Three follow-up attempts over more than a week.
4. If we are unable to contact you, a further notice using that will tell you the date on which we will disconnect your electricity.
5. A final notice of disconnection.

Note that if we attempt to contact you by phone, we may not leave a voicemail, and we may ring you multiple times to speak with you. We do not use a blocked number.

Disconnecting your electricity supply for non-payment

If you do not respond to the communications we send and your electricity bills remain unpaid, we may disconnect your electricity supply.

Note that disconnections may not happen in person, so a representative from our company will not necessarily visit your house. You must contact us in response to our reminder notices or disconnection notices to make sure your electricity remains connected.

In order to continue providing the service we do, including providing funding for Initiatives, non-payment is something we take seriously. We also acknowledge that energy supply is a core service which everyone needs to meet a decent standard of living.

If we intend to disconnect the electricity supply to your property for non-payment we will tell you at least 7 business days before we disconnect the electricity supply. We will do this by sending an email to your email address and give you a final warning at least 24 hours before we intend to disconnect you. Each notice will include information about the timeframe within which disconnection will take place and what you need to do to avoid

disconnection. We will not disconnect your electricity at night, immediately before or during a weekend or public holiday, during severe weather events or during a civil emergency.

If your electricity supply is disconnected, you may have it reconnected. This may mean you have to pay a reconnection fee to cover the cost of doing this. You will not pay a reconnection fee if you are disconnected in error.

To reconnect your electricity supply, please contact us.

Our Reconnection Process

If a disconnection has occurred at a property inadvertently or at a property occupied by a medically dependant or vulnerable customer then we will begin the reconnection process as soon as possible at no cost.

Otherwise, if your property has been disconnected, you will need to contact us to start the reconnection process. We will work with you to get your power on as quickly as possible. Reconnection requires the following conditions to be met:

- Payment of the total amount outstanding on your account.
- Payment of any applicable disconnection fees and additional fees incurred during the disconnection.
- Payment of any reconnection fees for unsuccessful attempts where you do not allow us reasonable access to your property or metering equipment.

For the reconnection, you will need to:

- Be at site at the time we reconnect or, if you can't do that, accept responsibility for the safety of the site.
- Make sure you switch off all appliances at the time we reconnect. This will help ensure that nothing gets damaged when the sudden surge of power flows through.
- Make sure we (or any of our third party representatives) can get on-going access to your site so we can do what we need to do under our Terms & Conditions of supply.
- Agree to any other reasonable extra Terms & Conditions we think are needed, if any.

Contact and Complaints

We do not have a call centre. In joining us, you acknowledge this and take responsibility for ensuring you are able to contact us via email as the primary means of contact. Emails are deemed received the day after they are sent, and we commit to answering emails from you within two business days, and to resolve any complaints within 10 business days. Emails are deemed received the day after they are sent.

If you have any concerns about the service you have received from us or if we haven't lived up to our commitments in this document, let us know first. We are committed to constantly improving our service and learning from mistakes.

If you have a complaint, you can contact us by emailing contact@comtricity.nz. We want to work with you to provide the best service possible and will work as quickly as possible to resolve the issue. If your complaint relates to another provider, we will pass it onto the correct provider within 1 business day. If it takes longer than 20 business days to resolve your complaint, then we will contact you to let you know why, how much longer it will take, and to discuss your options.

We are a member of the Utilities Disputes Ltd, who provides the Energy Complaints Scheme, a free and independent complaints resolution service. If for some reason we cannot resolve a complaint or problem to your satisfaction within 20 working days, you can take your complaint to the Utilities Disputes Ltd . visit www.utilitiesdisputes.co.nz, email info@utilitiesdisputes.co.nz or freephone: 0800 22 33 40.

Monitoring our performance

We uphold high standards of service and performance.

As an electricity retailer, we are regulated and supervised by the Government and independent organisations. This is done through several organisations, including the Electricity Authority, the Commerce Commission, and Utilities Disputes.

To demonstrate our commitment to serving our customers, we give information to the Electricity Authority as required under the Consumer Care Guidelines.

We will make sure we work within any guidelines agreed between retailers and support or health agencies within six months of their publication on the Electricity Authority's website.

Other services that can help you

Powerswitch

Find the cheapest electricity and gas plans
www.powerswitch.org.nz.

Money Talks

MoneyTalks is a free and confidential financial helpline that can connect you with financial mentors and other community services.

www.moneytalks.co.nz
0800 345 123

Citizens Advice Bureau

A nationwide network providing free, confidential, independent information on your rights and how to access the services you need.

www.cab.org.nz
0800 367 222

Work and Income

Work and Income is here to help you financially if you're on a low income or not working.

www.workandincome.govt.nz
0800 559 009

Community Energy Network

Energy efficiency and healthy homes community-based specialists.

www.communityenergy.org.nz

Eco Design Advisor

Improving the comfort, health and performance of New Zealand homes.

www.ecodesignadvisor.org.nz/resources

EnergyMate

EnergyMate is a free energy coaching service for households at risk of energy hardship that are struggling to pay their power bill or keep their home warm, delivered by the Electricity Retailers Association.

www.energymate.nz/contact

Utilities Disputes

A free, independent, and fair service that resolves complaints about electricity and gas.

www.utilitiesdisputes.co.nz

0800 22 33 40

We are committed to information disclosure and monitoring in accordance with the Electricity Authority Consumer Care guidelines.

If you have any queries about our Consumer Care Policy please contact our customer care team at contact@comtricity.nz.

This policy was approved by the CEO effective 1st July 2021.