

**INABILITY TO PAY FORM**  
**(continued)**

Total number of persons living in household \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

DOB \_\_\_\_\_ SS# \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

DOB \_\_\_\_\_ SS# \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

DOB \_\_\_\_\_ SS# \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

DOB \_\_\_\_\_ SS# \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

DOB \_\_\_\_\_ SS# \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

DOB \_\_\_\_\_ SS# \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this form, I hereby authorize any gas, electric utility or public energy assistance agency that serves me to exchange information relevant to this process. I acknowledge that I have received, read and understand the Disconnect Notice of Residential Member Rights and Possible Assistance. I attest that the above information is true and correct.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Detach and return completed form and proof of other income qualifying documentation to:

**East Central Energy**  
**PO Box 39, Braham, MN 55006**  
**or FAX 763-689-8021**

If anyone in your home is dependent on electrical, life-sustaining medical equipment, please complete the Life Support Registration form. The form is available on [eastcentralenergy.com](http://eastcentralenergy.com), or call 1-800-254-7944 and we will mail the form to you.

**COLD WEATHER RULE INCOME GUIDELINES**

For current Cold Weather Rule income guidelines, please contact your energy assistance provider listed below.

**MN ENERGY ASSISTANCE:**

Tri-County Action Programs, Inc.  
(Benton, Morrison and Sherburne Counties)  
320-251-1612 or 1-888-765-5597

Lakes & Pines Community Action Council  
(Carlton, Mille Lacs, Aitkin, Kanabec, Isanti, Chisago, and Pine Counties) 320-679-1800 or 1-800-832-6082

Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe  
320-532-4163 (ext. 1755 or 1757) or 320-362-4672

**MN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:**

Aitkin County Social Services  
218-927-7200 or 1-800-328-3744

Benton County Social Services  
320-968-5087 or 1-800-530-6254

Carlton County Financial Assistance, 218-879-4583  
Social Services 1-800-642-9082

Chisago County Human Services  
North Branch, 651-213-5200  
Center City, 651-213-5600

Isanti County Family Services, 763-689-1711

Kanabec County Family Services, 320-679-6350

Mille Lacs County Community and Veterans Services  
320-983-8208 or 1-888-270-8208

Morrison County Financial Assistance  
320-632-2951 or 1-800-269-1464

Pine County Financial Assistance, 1-800-450-7463  
Pine City, 320-591-1570  
Sandstone, 320-216-4100

Sherburne County Social Services  
763-765-4000 or 1-800-433-5239

Washington County Social Services  
651-430-6455

**WISCONSIN RESIDENTS ONLY**

Wisconsin PSC does not regulate cooperatives' cold weather shut-off protection. ECE follows the same cold weather collection practices in WI and MN. If you cannot pay your bill, call ECE to set up a mutually acceptable payment plan (the Inability to Pay Form is for MN residents only).

**WI ENERGY ASSISTANCE:**

Wisconsin Home Energy Assistance Program (WHEAP)  
Burnett, Douglas, and Washburn Counties  
1-800-506-5596

*Can my electricity be turned off  
in the winter? YES*

# Minnesota Cold Weather Rule

Disconnect Notice of  
Residential Member Rights and  
Possible Assistance



**The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule does not prevent winter disconnects.**



**If you receive a disconnection notice, contact ECE immediately. Disconnect dates from previous notices are still valid.**



**Read the Notice of Residential Member Rights and Possible Assistance before completing the Inability to Pay Form.**



**East Central Energy**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**1.800.254.7944**  
[eastcentralenergy.com](http://eastcentralenergy.com)

*ECE is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

## DISCONNECT NOTICE OF RESIDENTIAL MEMBER RIGHTS AND POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE

This notice informs you of your rights and responsibilities under the Cold Weather Rule. These rights and responsibilities are designed to help you meet winter utility bills. You must act **PROMPTLY**. If you choose not to assert your rights or choose not to enter into a mutually acceptable payment plan, your service may be disconnected.

The Cold Weather Rule provides that from October 1 through April 30 an electric cooperative cannot disconnect a residential consumer for nonpayment if the disconnection would affect the primary heat source,

### **AND all of the following conditions are met:**

1. You declare an inability to pay by completing the Inability to Pay Form.
2. You provide proof of last three months total gross household income.
3. Your total gross household (not individual) income is less than 50% of the state median, or you **provide proof** you are a **current** recipient of any public assistance with qualifying income requirements, including energy assistance.
4. Your account is current or reasonably on time with a payment plan or you make and keep a mutually acceptable payment plan at any time that considers the financial resources of the household.

The Cold Weather Rule and our policy provide you with these rights and responsibilities:

THE RIGHT to declare your inability to pay your utility bill. If you do so and if your total gross household income is less than 50% of the state median income, or if you are a current recipient of qualifying energy assistance or public assistance, the service affecting your primary heat source cannot be disconnected for nonpayment of your utility bill, provided that your account is current or reasonably on time with a payment plan, or you make and keep a mutually acceptable payment plan at any time.

THE RESPONSIBILITY to provide proof of documentation that your total gross household income is less than 50% of the state median guidelines.

THE RIGHT to a mutually acceptable payment plan with ECE. This payment plan will cover your existing outstanding balance plus the estimated use during the payment plan period. If you are able to pay but still wish to enter into a payment plan, contact ECE immediately.

THE RIGHT not to be involuntarily disconnected on a Friday or on a day before a holiday.

THE RIGHT not to be disconnected until at least 30 calendar days after the postmarked date of a disconnect notice and information or until 15 calendar days after a disconnect notice and information has been personally delivered. Disconnect dates from previous notices are still valid.

THE RIGHT, before you are to be involuntarily disconnected, to appeal your disconnect notice to ECE. Your service will not be disconnected until your appeal is resolved.

THE RESPONSIBILITY, if you choose to appeal, to deliver or mail a personal letter of appeal stating your situation and issues in dispute. Your letter of appeal must be in the hands of ECE personnel before the day of disconnection. The ECE appeal committee will review your appeal within 14 days after it is received. You must call ECE for the date and time of the appeal review if you wish to be present.

Minnesota's Cold Weather Protection rules were developed and are maintained by the State of Minnesota. For more information about the Cold Weather Rule, call us or see MN Statutes, Chapter 216B, Section .097, Public Utilities. To request a copy of the rules or ask specific questions, call the MN Department of Commerce at 1-800-657-3782.

You may qualify for state or federal fuel assistance. For complete qualifications and application information, contact one of the local agencies listed on the back of this brochure or visit [eastcentralenergy.com](http://eastcentralenergy.com) > Residential > Assistance Information.

### **ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIPS TO HELP LOWER YOUR WINTER BILLS**

- Seal air leaks to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
- Open shades during the day to let warm sunlight in. Close shades at night to keep cold air out.
- Wash clothes in cold water.
- Remove or cover window air conditioners during winter months.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75% less energy.
- Change furnace filters monthly.

## INABILITY TO PAY FORM

To be completed by Minnesota residents only

(Wisconsin residents - see note on back side of brochure)

Please read the Disconnect Notice of Residential Member Rights and Possible Assistance before completing this form.

If you cannot pay your bill in full and need to make and keep a mutually acceptable payment plan, call ECE at 1-800-254-7944.

If you are unable to pay your bill in full and need cold weather shut-off protection, complete this form and return to ECE after October 1.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

SS# \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Home) \_\_\_\_\_

(Cell) \_\_\_\_\_

Account number \_\_\_\_\_  
(from ECE billing statement)

Total amount owing \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I have applied **and been approved** for energy assistance and/or **have provided proof** of public assistance with qualifying income requirements and/or **proven** my total gross household (not individual) income, is less than 50% of the state median.

(If you check this box, skip Source of Income section.)

Total gross annual household income \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(past 12 months)

Source of Income (**Must provide proof** of last three months of total gross household income.)

### **Check all boxes that apply below**

- ☐ Employment/Unemployment
- ☐ Disability/Social Security/Pension
- ☐ Medical Assistance/GA Medical Care/MN Care
- ☐ AFDC/GA/MFIP
- ☐ Food Stamps/Children's Health Plan
- ☐ Energy Assistance
- ☐ Child support
- ☐ Worker's compensation
- ☐ Other



Form continued on reverse side