

## **Powershop Consumer Care Policy**

Powershop is all about providing great service and making things easy for you. We understand that electricity plays an essential role in all of our customers' lives - it's important to your health and wellbeing, and for keeping you connected with your friends and family. And as your electricity retailer, we're here to help you.

We're committed to ensuring you stay safe and connected. This policy applies to our residential customers and is our promise to keep you safe and help you manage your energy costs. It also includes other commitments to you, like:

- communicating with mutual respect and care during all interactions as part of our values/tikanga;
- working with you collaboratively and constructively to solve problems;
- working to understand your situation so that we can be proactive in offering assistance to meet your needs;
- communicating with you in a timely and clear way;
- making sure you have every opportunity to get the most out of your power;
- working with you to resolve payment difficulties as early as possible and, with your permission, linking you to one or more support agencies or social agencies to assist you; and
- working with you to try to keep your electricity connected if you are having payment difficulties.

If you're looking to become a Powershop customer we'll try to communicate with you clearly about your rights and the choices you can make, even if you haven't yet joined us. We offer all our consumers a variety of advice and support, including finding the best payment option for you.

We might not always get it right, but we're committed to learning from our experiences to improve the support we offer you.

As a customer, you have rights and responsibilities with us. You can read our Customer Terms and Conditions [here](#), along with any other terms and conditions that may apply to you.

Our Consumer Care Policy is aligned to the Electricity Authority's Consumer Care Guidelines (we've either adopted the recommendations in the Guidelines or taken an alternative action to achieve the same purpose and outcome). This Consumer Care Policy isn't a legally binding document and doesn't form part of our Standard Terms and Conditions. If there are any inconsistencies between this Policy and any of our terms and conditions, our terms and conditions will prevail.

## **Your personal information**

In providing you with electricity and related services, we need some information from you. We'll ensure this information is stored securely and only used for its intended purpose. We ask that you ensure your details are correct and let us know if anything changes. This will help us to:

- communicate with you in a clear and timely way;
- maintain accurate records of our interactions with you;
- confirm our contractual commitments to each other; and
- help resolve any disputes between us.

You can find out more about how we manage your personal information in our Customer Terms and Conditions [here](#) and our Privacy Policy [here](#).

## Joining Powershop

Our pricing and payment options are available online, or you can contact us to discuss which options meet your needs. This helps you make an informed decision.

Before you become a customer, we may ask you questions about yourself and your situation. We'll also get your permission to do a credit check.

If we don't accept you as a customer, we'll let you know why. If you're having a hard time finding an electricity retailer, we can refer you to a financial mentor or give you advice on what you can do.

If you'd like an independent place to check energy prices, you can use the free Powerswitch website to compare plans [here](#).

## Powershop pricing

Powershop has no plans as such. We offer our best possible price for your household based on where you live, how your meter is set up and the amount of power you use over the year.

Our pricing includes a daily fixed charge and variable electricity usage charge(s), which are based on your meter type and your network's pricing category.

We offer a range of payment methods - you can pay for your power by direct debit, credit card or debit card, internet banking, or with cash at a PostShop through a Powershop Recharge Card. In our online shop you can even buy power now, and pay later. You can also set up a regular payment date, or if a scheduled payment date doesn't suit, you can change the date yourself through your online account.

If there is a smart meter installed at your property you can check how much energy you are using, plus other information about your account on our app or online at any time. Simply download the app or sign into your account online [here](#).

For advice on ways to use energy more efficiently, see our energy saving tips [here](#).

## Authorised persons

You can ask us to communicate with you using an authorised person, such as a family member, friend, support person, or community worker.

Please ask this person first and, if they agree, let us know their name and contact details.

## Speaking your language

If we don't speak your language, you can use an authorised person to talk with us instead. Another option is to use a different communication method that suits you. For example, you can receive information from us in writing. Our team also have access to a real-time translation service to support you.

If you're Deaf, Hearing Impaired, Blind or Speech Impaired, the New Zealand Relay Service offer a free service that can support you to contact us. You can find out more about this service [here](#).

## If you have payment difficulties

We'll get in touch with you when we see your bill is overdue. We can help you manage your payments, particularly if you're having difficulties.

Here are some ways we can help:

- we can check to see you are on the best pricing for your usage (i.e. low user vs standard user pricing);

- if a scheduled payment date doesn't suit, you can change the date yourself on our mobile app or through your online account.
- if you'd like to set up a regular payment date that coincides with when you get paid, for example, just give us a call and we'll sort it;
- where your electricity consumption changes significantly, we have measures in place to make you aware of the change and tips for ways to help you pay, if you need it; and
- we can look at setting up a special payment plan arrangement to suit you. We'll then check your payments to make sure your payment plan is working well, or contact you if we think there's a better way for you to meet your payments.

### **Linking you with financial mentoring and support agencies**

If you're struggling to keep up with your bill payments we can, with your permission, connect you with support agencies, who will help you with things like paying your bill.

We'll give you some time to talk to these agencies and receive help without disconnecting your electricity supply. We'll work with you and your support agency and make sure we all use agreed ways of communicating with each other.

The following organisations may also be able to help with financial assistance and/or free budgeting advice:

- Social agency assistance: You may be able to get extra assistance from Work and Income or another social agency. You can contact Work and Income on 0800 559 009, or jump online at [www.workandincome.govt.nz](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz)
- Budgeting advice: You may want to get some budgeting advice if you're finding it difficult to pay your bill. This friendly, helpful service is available for free from Money Talks. You can contact the financial helpline on 0800 345 123 or SMS on 4209, or visit online at [www.moneytalks.co.nz](http://www.moneytalks.co.nz)

### **Disconnection for non-payment of your electricity bill**

Disconnection for non-payment is a last resort.

We may disconnect your electricity supply if you don't pay your bill in full or if you default on the payment plan we've agreed with you.

Before disconnecting your electricity supply we'll make multiple attempts to communicate with you, using more than one method and by contacting your authorised person if you've provided us with one. We may also contact you at different times of the day.

Except in the case of requested, agreed, emergency or safety-related disconnections, we will:

- give you at least 10 business days' notice of disconnection; and
- provide a final warning no less than 24 hours before any disconnection. We'll also take all reasonable steps to ensure you receive the final warning.

The final disconnection warning we send you will include:

- the address of the premises to be disconnected;
- the timeframe for disconnecting your electricity supply;
- how you may be able to avoid disconnection of your electricity supply (if applicable);
- the cost of reconnection (including details of any charges you'll need to pay on top of your unpaid invoice);
- our payment options;

- information and contact details for Work and Income and other budget advice, support and social agencies that may be able to help;
- information about our Medically Dependent Consumer application process; and
- our complaints resolution process and the contact details of Utilities Disputes;

We'll only disconnect your electricity supply on a business day, apart from Fridays and the day prior to a public holiday. We don't disconnect the electricity supply of medically dependent consumers for non-payment.

If no one has signed up as a customer for the electricity being used at a residential site, we may disconnect the electricity at any stage. However, we'll send sign up and disconnection information to the address before we do this.

There may be times where we can't disconnect in the timeframe we've given. If this is the case, we'll send another notice with the new timeframe before disconnecting the electricity supply.

### **Reconnecting your electricity supply**

You need to contact us if you want to reconnect after your electricity supply has been disconnected. We'll arrange to reconnect you, provided you meet our criteria and pay any applicable charges, including:

- the total amount outstanding on your account;
- any disconnection fees and additional fees incurred during the disconnection process;
- any reconnection fees; and
- any charges that have accumulated since disconnection, including fixed daily and metering charges.

Our schedule of service fees is available on our website [here](#).

We may also require you to:

- be at your property at the time we reconnect;
- make sure we can get safe ongoing access to your property (to our satisfaction) so our staff and contractors can reconnect the property;
- agree to any additional and reasonable terms and conditions we think are needed; and
- make sure you switch off all appliances at the time we reconnect to ensure they're not damaged by any power surges.

### **Medically Dependent Consumers**

The health and wellbeing of our customers is important to us.

If you or someone living with you (even for a short period) depend on electricity to run critical medical support equipment, then you are considered a 'medically dependent consumer'. Examples of critical medical equipment include ventilators, renal dialysis machines and oxygen concentrators.

We'll ask you if this applies when you first sign up with us, and we'll remind you to tell us annually. If your situation changes, or if you think that you or someone in your household may be medically dependent on electricity, you should get in touch with us to let us know as soon as possible.

Once you've let us know that you or someone living at your property is medically dependent, with your permission, we'll collect and record all relevant information from you and register this status on your account. We'll also share this information with certain third-party providers - like your network and metering companies and our field services staff - so they're aware if they're working at your property (eg checking or upgrading your electricity meter).

The medical dependency will need to be verified by a qualified health practitioner (eg your doctor, District Health Board, private hospital) at your own cost unless we ask for a re-verification. If you've been given a "Notice of Potential Medically Dependent Consumer Status", please send us a copy.

If we don't receive the required verification from you or your health practitioner by the date we've outlined, we may remove your status as a medically dependent consumer.

If you're a medically dependent consumer, it's important that you have an emergency response plan in place in case there's an unplanned power cut or emergency disconnection.

An emergency response plan should include anything you need to do to keep yourself safe for the full duration of any power outage. It could include having a fully charged battery available, going to a friend or family member's house that has electricity or, in serious cases, calling an ambulance to be taken to hospital.

For more information on preparing an emergency response plan for your household, go to: [www.eranz.org.nz/medically-dependent](http://www.eranz.org.nz/medically-dependent)

## **Fees**

As a customer, you're responsible for paying all charges and fees from the date your property gets switched to us, or from when you first used electricity or services we provide.

Information about our prices and rates are available on our website and included in the information we send you at the time you join us. These charges may be updated from time to time. We will notify you of any changes in accordance with our Terms and Conditions.

Our schedule of service fees is available on our website [here](#). This schedule includes charges for any additional services.

If you ask for or need an additional service, we'll tell you the amount or give you an estimate so you can decide if you want to go ahead with it. We'll also let you know if there's anything you can do to avoid being charged the fee.

We may need to adjust your pricing if the information we have used to set the prices is incorrect or needs to be amended. We'll let you know if this happens.

## **Comprehensive Credit Reporting**

If you look to sign up to Powershop, we will ask your permission to approach a credit reporting agency for information about your credit situation. We use comprehensive credit reporting, which takes into account both positive and negative credit information such as the type and amount of credit you have and whether you make repayments on time.

We use your credit score to assess your credit worthiness and whether we can open an account for you. We also consider other relevant factors we're made aware of at the time of the application.

The credit reporting agencies in New Zealand are [Centrix](#), [illion](#) and [Equifax](#). You can contact each of these agencies directly to get your free credit report and see your credit score.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner website has some useful information on [credit reporting and what it means for you](#) as well as a [summary of your rights under the Credit Reporting Privacy Code](#).

## **Family violence**

We are committed to providing confidential and respectful assistance to customers experiencing family violence. If you are affected by family violence and need access to external support

services, or there is another way that Powershop can assist you, please do not hesitate to contact our team when it is safe to do so.

We recognise that family violence is a potential cause of payment difficulty. We can provide support and assistance to customers in debt or who anticipate payment difficulties and will work with you to find a solution for your individual situation.

There are a number of external support services who can help customers affected by family violence. We'll give you information about the availability of support services that are safe, respectful and appropriate in your circumstances. In particular, we may refer you to the following services:

- Women's Refuge – available on 0800 733 843 or online at [www.womensrefuge.org.nz](http://www.womensrefuge.org.nz)
- Shine – available on 0508 744 633 or online at [www.2shine.org.nz](http://www.2shine.org.nz)
- It's Not OK – available on 0800 456 450 or online at [www.areyouok.org.nz](http://www.areyouok.org.nz)

In an emergency, if you don't feel safe, always call 111.

### **Feedback and complaints**

You can contact us at any time to talk about your situation, ask questions about your bill, ask questions about this policy, or to give us feedback.

If you have any concerns about the service you have received from us or if we haven't lived up to our commitments to you, please let us know.

You can raise a complaint by contacting our Customer Care Team via our [live webchat](#), on 0800 462 668 or by emailing us at [info@powershop.co.nz](mailto:info@powershop.co.nz).

We'll try to resolve your complaint as quickly as possible and will acknowledge your complaint within two working days of receiving it.

If we haven't resolved your complaint, we'll respond to you within seven working days to let you know the steps that have been (or will be) taken to try and resolve your complaint. We'll attempt to resolve your complaint within 20 working days after receiving it.

You can contact Utilities Disputes at any time for free independent advice on 0800 22 33 40 or by sending an email to [info@utilitiesdisputes.co.nz](mailto:info@utilitiesdisputes.co.nz).

*This policy was approved on 30 November 2021 and may be updated from time to time.*

*We commit to providing information to the Electricity Authority in accordance with the information disclosure and monitoring recommendations in the Consumer Care Guidelines.*