

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission has issued a Cold Weather Rule (Chapter 7820 No. 1800) which provides that from October 15 through April 15, a utility cannot disconnect a residential utility customer for nonpayment if the disconnection would affect their primary heat source and if a customer has demonstrated an inability to pay on forms provided by the utility company, and who made reasonable timely payment to the utility under a payment plan that considers the financial resources of the household.

To qualify for the Cold Weather Rule the customers utility account must have been paid in full or reasonable timely payments must have been made under a payment schedule as of the billing cycle immediately preceding the start of the current cold weather months. The household income of the customer needs to be less than 50 percent of the state median income (please refer to the chart).

This notice is to tell you about your rights and responsibility under the Cold Weather Rule. These rights and responsibilities are designed to help you with 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 schedule, **your service may be disconnected.**

The Cold Weather Rule provides you with these options:

The right to declare your Inability to Pay your utility bill in writing on forms provided by Hutchinson Utilities Commission (HUC). If you do so, service affecting your primary heat source cannot be disconnected for nonpayment of your bill, if you enter into a payment schedule with the utility.

The responsibility, if you choose to declare Inability to Pay, to complete an "Inability to Pay" form and return it to HUC. Upon mailing this form, you must also contact HUC to arrange a payment plan.

The right to a mutually acceptable payment schedule with HUC. This payment schedule will cover your existing amount due plus the estimated usage during the payment schedule period. If you are able to pay but still wish to enter into a payment schedule, contact HUC immediately to arrange a schedule.

The responsibility of making payments as agreed or promptly notifying HUC why you cannot keep the agreement. You may then request that the original payment schedule be changed. Any change is initially subject to HUC approval.

The right to appeal. The customer has the right to appeal a notice of involuntary disconnection. HUC will not disconnect the customer until the appeal is resolved.

Utility responsibility is to notify the City of Hutchinson's Water Department of any utility disconnects during the period of October 15 through April 15.

If you need help paying your utility bills, you may qualify for state or federal fuel assistance. To find out if you qualify and how to apply, contact the organizations listed here.

Heartland Community Action Agency

McLeod County Outreach

218 Main St S Suite 108

Hutchinson MN 55350

320-587-5244

800-829-2132

800-992-1710 (Willmar)

Fax: 320-587-2677 (Hutchinson)

Fax: 320-235-7703 (Willmar)

Common Cup Ministry

218 Main St S

Hutchinson MN 55350

320-587-2213

McLeod County Social Service

1805 Ford Ave N Ste 100

Glencoe MN 55336

320 864 2111