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## Budget Billing Policy ▶

### BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES Budget Billing Policy September 1, 2016

This policy is in effect for Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) residential customers to sign up for budget billing to even out their utility costs by paying a consistent amount each month. Budget billing will help manage unanticipated high billings during summer and winter months.

A customer can enroll in the budget billing program in March and September of each year. An application will have to be filled out and returned to BPU by last day of chosen month. The application can be downloaded from BPU’s website [www.bpu.org](http://www.bpu.org) or picked up at BPU’s business office at 8027 Highland Scenic Road.

A budget billing amount will be determined by using the previous 12 months of billing history for the customer’s residence and dividing the total amount by 12.

Budget billing accounts will be calculated twice a year; at the end of March, effective with the April billing and at the end of September, effective with the October billing. BPU has the right to increase or decrease the calculated amount at any time, if BPU believes it is necessary. The customer will be notified by BPU if a change is necessary.

To be eligible for budget billing the customer must:

- Have a 12 month billing history at current place of residence.
- Be current in utility payments and have a good paying history. (No more than one (1) penalty in a 12 month period.) Account has to be paid in full when enrolling in the program.
- Agree to remain in the program for 12 months. After the 12 month period, a customer can be removed from budget billing by notifying BPU in writing or sending an e-mail that they no longer wish to be enrolled in the budget billing program. Customer would have to wait another 12 months before being re-enrolled.
- Agree to pay the full budget amount each month by the due date of customer’s utility bill.
- Agree that budget billing accounts are ineligible for time extensions or a payment arrangement to pay budget amount.
- Agree that after two (2) delinquent payments, or if account is in disconnect status the account will automatically be removed from budget billing and customer will have to wait 12 months, with a good paying history, before being allowed to enroll in the program again.

**Business & Repair Office Hours**  
7:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.  
**Business Number:**  
829-8726  
**Repair Number:**  
829-2193  
**Emergency 24 hour service 365 days a year:**  
218-829-2193

EMAIL@BPU.ORG

[WWW.BPU.ORG](http://WWW.BPU.ORG)

**Facebook:**  
Brainerd Public Utilities

Call **Gopher State One** at 1-800-252-1166 for water & electric locations 48 hours before digging begins.

**All Electrical Work** performed in the City of Brainerd requires a “**Request for Electrical Inspection**” form to be filed with the State of Minnesota.

## Fire Department Open House ▶

Age matters when it comes to your smoke alarms.

To find out how old a smoke alarm is, look at the manufacture date on the back of the alarm. Smoke alarms should be replaced 10 years from the date of manufacture.



Learn about smoke alarms and other fire safety information at the annual Brainerd Fire Department Open House on October 13 from 5 to 7 pm at the Brainerd Fire Station, 23 Laurel Street.



**BPU will be celebrating Public Power Week on Thursday, October 13 at the Fire Hall during the Open House. We will see you there! AND join us in celebrating Public Power Week.**

This year’s celebration takes place Monday, Oct. 2, through Friday, Oct. 8 at Brainerd Public Utilities from 8 am – 3:00 pm. We will have information about our utility and its services, also cookies and coffee available for you, our customers!

## Annual Notice to All Residential Customers

### *Cold Weather Rule*

The Cold Weather Rule is designed to protect people who may have trouble paying their electric bills in the winter.

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule applies from October 15 to April 15. The rule, established by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, means that your utility cannot disconnect your residential electrical service during the winter **IF** the customer meets **ALL OF** the following requirements:

- The customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
- Utility disconnection would affect the customer's primary heat source.
- The customer has declared inability to pay on forms provided by the utility) If this form is not completed, you are not protected.
- The household income of the customer is less than 50 percent of the state median income level, as documented by the customer to the utility.

If you have trouble paying your utility bill, local agencies may be able to provide payment assistance. The Minnesota Department of Human Services recommends you call the county in which you live.

## Important Notice for Military Personnel

*Effective August 1, 2007*



Section 325E.028 of the Minnesota statutes pertaining to utility payment arrangements for military service personnel outlines their rights and responsibilities effective August 1, 2007. Minnesota's Municipal Electric Utilities must not disconnect the utility service of a residential customer if a member of the household has been issued orders into active duty, deployment, or change in duty station if a residential customer meets criteria set forth in this statute.

Application forms are available at Brainerd Public Utilities or on our Web site at [www.bpu.org](http://www.bpu.org). If you would like a copy of this statute or an application sent in the mail, please contact BPU at 218-825-3200. An application received with out copies of income statements and proof of military orders overseas is considered incomplete, resulting in the possibility of no shut-off protection.

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## BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES

POLICY 2005-10

Adopted 01/01/86

Revised 12/06/05

### DISCONNECTION OF SERVICE

#### DISCONNECTION FOR NON-PAYMENT OF BILL

**A customer's account is considered delinquent if the current charges are not paid to Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) by the due date of the bill. IT IS ALWAYS THE CUSTOMER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO PAY BILLS IN A TIMELY MANNER AND IN FULL UNLESS OTHERWISE AGREED. The following procedures will be followed if the bill is not paid in full each month.**

The customer will be notified by regular mail that he/she is delinquent. The customer will be given five (5) business days after the date of mailing to pay the amount owing.

If the customer does not respond to the delinquent notice he/she will receive a disconnection notice delivered by regular mail. The disconnection date will be scheduled for five (5) business days after the date of mailing the disconnection notice. If the disconnection notice is for a rental property, a copy of the notice will be sent to the landlord.

If the customer does not pay the amount due on the disconnection notice in full, or make payment arrangements by the disconnect date, their service will be disconnected.

The customer may request a payment arrangement which will allow him/her to pay their delinquent amount over a three (3) month period. Current charges will also have to be paid by the due date each month. **Customers failing to make scheduled payments or current charges can be disconnected immediately.**

Once a customer has been disconnected for non-payment or not complying with the payment arrangement, the service will not be reconnected until the customer pays all the account charges in full. This includes current charges and a deposit if one has not been paid previously or if the paid deposit is not sufficient. A reconnection fee will also have to be paid. During the hours of 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. the fee is \$50 for each service and after 3:00 p.m. and on weekends and holidays, the fee is \$150.

Payment for accounts that are on the disconnection list each week must be made with cash, money order, or credit card. No checks will be accepted.

#### MEDICAL CONDITIONS

**BPU shall not discontinue electric service if such action will aggravate an existing serious illness of any person who is a permanent resident of the premise where service is rendered *IF* the customer complies with the following requirements regarding such illness.**

The illness must be certified to BPU by a registered physician on BPU's Physician's Certification of Illness form. The form must be filled out completely.

Initial certification by the physician may be made by telephone if the completed form is forwarded to the utility within five days.

**Initial certification shall prohibit disconnection of service for thirty (30) days. Certification may be renewed by the customer for an additional thirty (30) days by providing another certificate to BPU. It is the customer's responsibility to provide a new certificate every 30 days. FAILURE TO RENEW THE CERTIFICATE ENTITLES BPU TO START DISCONNECTION PROCEDURES.**

The customer cannot use their illness as a way not to pay their utility bill. The customer will be required to make a payment arrangement to pay their past due bill and keep the current charges paid.

#### DISCONNECTION OF SERVICE WITHOUT NOTICE

**BPU may disconnect service to any customer without further notice for the following reasons:**

- \* In the event of unauthorized use, theft of power, and/or tampering (see Policy 2003-4) with BPU's equipment.
- \* In the event that a condition has been determined to be hazardous to the customer or other customers of BPU, BPU's equipment, or to the general public.
- \* When a customer is in violation of municipal, state, or national electric codes.
- \* When a customer has not complied with the requirements for application for service.