



BRAINERD PUBLIC UTILITIES

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Disconnection of Utility Service

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Latest Revision/Effective Date: January 27, 2026

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I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to explain when and why Brainerd Public Utilities (BPU) may disconnect utility services, how customers are notified, and what steps customers can take to avoid disconnection or restore service. This policy is intended to promote timely payment, protect health and safety, and ensure reliable utility service for all customers. This policy applies to disconnections related to nonpayment, safety concerns, unauthorized use, code violations, and other conditions permitted by law.

II. Scope

This policy applies to all customers receiving utility services from BPU.

III. Definitions

Account: A customer record maintained by BPU for the provision and billing of electric, water, or wastewater utility services to a specific premises.

Customer: Any individual, business, property owner, tenant, estate, or legal entity that has established an account with BPU and is responsible for charges associated with utility service.

Current Charges: Utility charges billed for the most recent billing period that are due and payable by the stated due date.

Delinquent Account: An account for which current charges have not been paid in full on or before the established due date.

Delinquency Notice: A written or electronic notice issued by BPU informing a customer that their account is delinquent and providing a specified period to remit payment before further action is taken.

Disconnection Notice: A written or electronic notice issued by BPU advising the customer of a scheduled service disconnection date if payment is not received or a payment arrangement is not made.

Disconnection of Service: The physical or administrative termination of one or more utility services provided by BPU.

Payment Arrangement: An agreement approved by the Credit Collections Representative allowing a customer to pay delinquent charges over a defined period not to exceed three (3) months, while remaining current on ongoing charges.

Preferred Method of Notification: The communication method selected by the customer and maintained in the billing system for receiving notices, including but not limited to mail, email, or electronic notification.

Reconnection: The restoration of utility service following disconnection after all applicable requirements have been satisfied.

Reconnection Fee: A fee established in the BPU fee schedule and charged for restoring utility service following disconnection.

Deposit: A security amount required by BPU as a condition of service, which may be required or increased prior to reconnection.

Bad Debt: Outstanding balances previously written off or unpaid on any prior BPU account associated with the customer.

Medical Certification: A written certification completed by a registered physician on BPU's Physician's Certification of Illness form verifying that discontinuation of electric service would aggravate a serious illness of a permanent resident of the premises.

Permanent Resident: An individual who resides at the premises as their primary place of residence.

Unauthorized Use: The use of utility service without authorization, including theft of service, meter tampering, or bypassing BPU equipment.

BPU-Owned Equipment: Any meter, seal, service component, or related utility infrastructure owned and maintained by BPU, regardless of location.

Tampering: Any unauthorized interference with BPU-owned equipment, including breaking seals, altering meters, or otherwise impairing accurate measurement or safe operation.

IV. Policy Statement

A. Disconnection For Non-Payment of Bill

1. A customer's account is considered delinquent if the current charges are not paid on or before the due date. The following procedures will be followed if the bill is not paid in full each month.
2. The customer will be notified by their preferred method of notification of the delinquency. The customer will be given five (5) business days after the date of the delinquent notice to pay the amount due.
3. If the customer does not respond to the delinquent notice they will receive a disconnection notice delivered by their preferred method of notification. The disconnection date will be scheduled for five (5) business days after the date of the disconnection notice. If the disconnection notice is for a rental property, a copy of the notice will be sent to the landlord.
4. If the customer does not pay the amount due on the disconnect notice in full, or make payment arrangements by the disconnect date, their service(s) will be disconnected.
5. The customer may request a payment arrangement which will allow them to pay their delinquent amount over a maximum of 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, along with their current monthly charges, will be

disconnected immediately. BPU has the right to refuse a customer's request to make an arrangement.

6. Once a customer has been disconnected for non-payment, or not complying with the payment arrangement, the service(s) will not be reconnected until the customer pays all the account charges, including reconnection fees (per fee schedule), in full. This includes current charges and a deposit if one has not been paid previously or if the paid deposit is not sufficient. Reconnection of service(s) will only be done between the hours of 7:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m., Monday- Friday.
7. Payment for disconnected accounts must be made with cash, money order, or credit card. No checks will be accepted.
8. All previously incurred bad debts to BPU must be paid in full or at the discretion of credit/collections representative, make a payment arrangement.

B. 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.

1. 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.
2. Initial certification by the physician may be made by telephone if the completed form is forwarded to the utility within five days.
3. 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.
4. 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.

C. Deceased Customers

When BPU discovers that a BPU customer is deceased, the utility service(s) will be disconnected 30 days after finding out of the death, if BPU is not notified by the executor of the estate; or if another person moves into the deceased's residence and does not transfer the utility bill into his/her name.

D. Disconnection Of Service Without Notice

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

1. In the event of unauthorized use, theft of power, and/or tampering with BPU's equipment.

2. 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.
3. When a customer is in violation of municipal, state, or national electric codes.
4. When a customer has not complied with the requirements for application for service.

E. Tampering With Electric Meter

Stealing electricity is dangerous and against the law. Tampering with any electric facility, including the meter box and its seals is dangerous. Anyone who breaks the seal and tampers with the meter exposes him/herself to the risk of electrocution. Per BPU Policy No. 2003-4 BPU will administer a zero-tolerance program for unauthorized use of utility meters. BPU has the authority to bring civil or criminal action per MN Statute 325E.026.

V. Procedures

A. Disconnection for Non-Payment of Bill

1. Delinquency Determination

The Credit Collections Representative shall classify an account as delinquent when current charges are not paid in full by the established due date.

2. Delinquency Notice

The Credit Collections Representative shall issue a delinquency notice to the customer using the customer's preferred method of notification. The notice shall provide the customer with five (5) business days from the notice date to pay the outstanding balance in full.

3. Disconnection Notice

If payment is not received within the delinquency period, the Credit Collections Representative shall issue a disconnection notice using the customer's preferred method of notification. The disconnection date shall be scheduled no earlier than five (5) business days from the date of the disconnection notice.

For rental properties, a copy of the disconnection notice shall also be sent to the property owner or landlord.

4. Payment Arrangements

The Credit Collections Representative may, at their discretion, approve a payment arrangement allowing the customer to pay delinquent charges over a period not to exceed three (3) months.

Current monthly charges must continue to be paid by the due date.

Failure to comply with the payment arrangement or to pay current charges shall result in immediate disconnection.

5. Service Disconnection

If the customer fails to pay the amount due in full or enter into an approved payment arrangement by the scheduled disconnection date, the Credit Collections Representative shall authorize disconnection of applicable utility services.

6. Reconnection Requirements

Following disconnection for non-payment or failure to comply with a payment arrangement, service shall not be reconnected until all outstanding charges are paid in full, including reconnection fees and any required deposit.

Reconnection shall occur only between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

7. Accepted Forms of Payment

Payments for disconnected accounts shall be accepted only by cash, money order, or credit card. Checks shall not be accepted.

8. Prior Bad Debt Review

The Credit Collections Representative shall verify whether the customer has outstanding prior bad debt with BPU. All such balances must be paid in full or addressed through a payment arrangement approved by the Credit Collections Representative prior to service continuation.

9. Exceptions to be Documented

Medical Conditions, Deceased Customers, Disconnection of Service Without Notice, Tampering With Electric Meter shall be documented within the notes section of the customer account within the billing software.

VI. Roles and Responsibilities

The Credit Collections Representative will be responsible for administering the policy with oversight from the Business Office Supervisor.

VII. Compliance and References

Minnesota Public Utility Commission Cold Weather Rule

Minnesota State Statutes: §216B.0976, 216B.098

VIII. Associated Forms and Attachments

None

IX. Review and Update Schedule

This policy will be scheduled to be reviewed every two years. The policy was originally

Adopted: January of 1986

Revised: December 6, 2005, November 24, 2015, May 27, 2024, and January 27, 2026

X. Approval and Authority

The Public Utilities Commission is responsible for approving this policy and providing governance oversight to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and utility standards.