



Coronavirus (COVID-19): I still cannot afford to pay my utilities because of COVID-19. Can they be shut off?

❖ Read this only if you live in the state of Washington.

No. The Governor has extended the moratorium on shutting off residential utilities for non-payment through **September 30, 2021**, or when the COVID-19 public emergency ends, whichever comes first. Utilities that cannot be shut off for nonpayment right now are electricity, natural gas, landline telephones, and water (including private water systems). Utility companies also cannot charge customers late fees or reconnection fees through that date. This is the final extension.

My utility company refuses to reconnect my utilities because of unpaid bills. Can they do this?

No. The Governor's moratorium requires companies to reconnect residential customers whose accounts were disconnected for nonpayment.

I'm struggling to pay my utility bills. Can I get help?

Maybe! You have options. This website tells you what to say when you call:

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov/utility-assistance/>

Call your utility company. Ask them about:

- **COVID-19 Assistance Funds**—There is \$40 million in funds to help customers struggling with utility bills. Call your utility provider to see if you are eligible. You could be eligible even if you already got other financial help or were denied financial help before. Also, utility companies have other funds to help people, so ask about alternatives.

- **Payment Plans**—A payment plan can help spread out the cost of overdue bills over time. This will help you avoid disconnection after the moratorium ends. Call your utility company to learn more.
- **Budget Billing**—Some customers prefer to pay the same amount every month. This option avoids high bills in the winter and low bills in the summer. It also allows you to accurately budget for your monthly energy bill. The company averages the cost of the service used over the past 12 months and gives you a set payment for the upcoming year. At the end of the 12-month budget period, the plan will automatically be adjusted to charge only for the energy used. Budget Billing is available anytime of the year. There are no income limits. Call your company to learn more.

I'm not able to pay before September 30, 2021. Can I prevent any disconnects?

Maybe! Contact your utility company and inform them of your situation. Ask them what options are available to you, including:

- **Payment Plans**—having a payment plan on file with your utility company will help you avoid being disconnected. Call your utility company to set up a plan that works for you.
- **Community Partnerships**—Utility companies have often worked with community partners to help customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ask your utility provider if they partner with any organizations and what services they provide. Call your utility company to learn more.

What is my utility company's phone number?

It should be on the bills you get. If you need help finding the phone number:

- **Visit** the state Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) at <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/utility-assistance/>. Type in your home address. It will give you a list of the utilities available at that address, **or**
- **Call** the UTC at 1-888-333-9882. They can give you the right phone number, **or**
- **Chat online** with the UTC at: www.utc.wa.gov.



If you need language assistance, contact the UTC Consumer Protection Help Line for interpretation services: 1-888-333- 9882 or email consumer@utc.wa.gov.

My utilities were still shut off for non-payment.

Get legal help right away. Call:

- **Facing Eviction?** Call 1-855-657-8387
- **Apply online** with [CLEAR*Online](https://nwjustice.org/apply-online) - nwjustice.org/apply-online
- **Facing Foreclosure?** Call 1-800-606-4819
- **Facing a legal issue in King County (other than Eviction or Foreclosure)?** Call **2-1-1** (or toll-free 1-877-211-9274) weekdays 8:00 am - 6:00 pm. They will refer you to a legal aid provider.
- **Facing a legal issue outside of King County (other than Eviction or Foreclosure)?** Call the [CLEAR Hotline](https://nwjustice.org/clear-hotline) at 1-888-201-1014 weekdays between 9:15 am - 12:15 pm.
- **Seniors (age 60 and over) with a legal issue outside of King County** can also call CLEAR*Sr at 1-888-387-7111
- **Deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired** callers can call any of these numbers using the relay service of your choice.

CLEAR and 2-1-1 will provide interpreters.

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