

Help manage your power, heat, and other utility bills

DEVELOPED BY THE CUSTOMER AFFORDABILITY RESOURCES FOR ENERGY EDUCATION (CARE) WORKING GROUP

»» Are you struggling with paying your energy bills or have had your utilities limited or cut off?

Contact your energy provider to learn about:

- What to do if you fall behind on bills
- Payment plans that could make your bill more affordable
- How to get a limiter removed
- How to get service reconnected
- Deposits and late fees
- The date your bill is due
- All the charges on your bill
- Paying your bill through auto-withdrawal
- Different types of utility rates

»» If you're unable to pay your bill or need help with reconnection

contact 211 Alberta:

Dial 2-1-1 from anywhere in Alberta 24/7.

ab.211.ca

- 211 is an essential service that helps connect Albertans to the right service for whatever issue you need help with, at the right time.
- Connect by phone, text INFO to 211, or by live chat on the 211 website.
- **Speak a language other than English?** 211 offers phone service in over 170 languages.

Additional Resources

Alberta Supports:

alberta.ca/alberta-supports

1-877-644-9992

Provides help for seniors, people with disabilities, job seekers, parents and families, homelessness, financial assistance, abuse, and family violence prevention.

Utilities Consumer Advocate (UCA):

ucahelps.alberta.ca

310-4822

Call the UCA to discuss bill issues, your rights, and your options.

Visit the UCA website to find information on:

- How you can **choose your energy rate**
- Service disconnection and reconnection
- The charges on your utility bills
- Understanding the utility sector

Crisis Support Services

Bissell Centre Edmonton,

Community Bridge line:

780-423-2285, ext. 122

United Way Central Alberta Red Deer:

403-343-3900

Distress Centre Calgary

24-hour Crisis Line

(text or phone): 403-266-4357

If you are overdue on your utility bill contact your energy provider as soon as possible.

Utility companies have government-approved processes when notifying customers about late payments, cut offs, and being removed from a contracted service. Knowing which step your account is at can help you get the help you need.

If you're with a retail energy provider, you can receive:

- Multiple scheduled payment reminders (phone, mail, email, or text)
- A final non-payment notice
- Phone messages advising of pending contract termination
- Notification of contract termination
 - Your retail contract will be terminated, and your energy service is transferred to the default regulated rate option (RRO) provider for your area
 - You are still responsible for any unpaid balances from your retail contract plan

If you're on the RRO you can receive:

- Payment due date reminders (mail or email)
- Multiple scheduled payment reminders (phone, mail, email, or text)
- A final non-payment notice
- Phone message advising that your service will be disconnected or limited
- Final door tag, email or mail notice that your service will be disconnected or limited

How to tell if you are on the RRO

If you have not agreed to enter into a contract, you are on the RRO. Your bill will have the words 'regulated' or 'RRO' on it. If you are on the RRO, the energy rate you pay changes each month.

Energy Saving Resources:

For options on how you could save you money on your utility bill visit:

ucahelps.alberta.ca/choosing-a-retailer.aspx

For a list of Alberta energy retailers, visit:

ucahelps.alberta.ca/retailers.aspx

Energy efficiency can help lower your utility bill:

Improving a home's energy efficiency doesn't have to involve expensive upgrades or months of renovations.

Visit: ucahelps.alberta.ca/tips-to-save-money-on-utility-bills.aspx for more information.

If you are having issues paying your energy bills, you may hear the terms below:

Reminders: Includes account balance, advice on payment timelines and key contacts for assistance.

Contract Termination: Refers to the cancellation of a retail plan/contract service being transferred to the default energy provider. The RRO provider for your area of the province can be found at:

ucahelps.alberta.ca/retailers.aspx

Disconnection: Energy services are disconnected on RRO accounts that remain unpaid despite efforts to settle balances. Power is disconnected only as a last resort.

Limited Electricity: A load limiter that has been applied to overdue accounts allows for a few appliances or devices to run simultaneously. If too much electricity is used, the limiter cuts all power. A reset button can restore limited power.

Medical Allowances: If you are dependent on medical devices requiring electricity, please inform your electricity provider so this information is added to your account and considerations can be made.

If you have concerns about paying your utility bills, you can contact the Utilities Consumer Advocate to learn about your options before reaching out to your electricity and/or natural gas provider(s).

About the CARE working group:

CARE works collaboratively to provide policy and program options to address the needs and concerns of Alberta's vulnerable energy customers.

The CARE working group is made up of representatives from across Alberta's energy utilities, including:

- Retail energy contract providers
- Regulated rate providers
- Municipalities providing regulate rate service
- The Alberta Utilities Commission
- The Office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate