

Ontario Energy  
Board  
P.O. Box 2319  
2300 Yonge Street  
27th. Floor  
Toronto ON M4P 1E4  
Telephone: (416) 481-1967  
Facsimile: (416) 440-7656  
Toll Free : 1-888-632-6273

Commission de l'énergie  
de l'Ontario  
C.P. 2319  
2300, rue Yonge  
27e étage  
Toronto ON M4P 1E4  
Téléphone: (416) 481-1967  
Télécopieur: (416) 440-7656  
Numéro sans frais : 1-888-632-6273



Compliance Office

October 5, 2007

Compliance Bulletin 200705

To: All Licensed Electricity Distributors

Re: **Disconnection for Non-payment: Requirement to Provide Fire and Other Public Safety Notices**

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**This Bulletin is intended to remind licensed electricity distributors of their obligation under the Distribution System Code to provide fire and other public safety notices prior to disconnecting a property.**

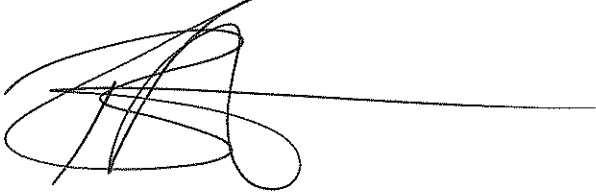
In 2004, the Board amended the Distribution System Code (DSC) to include an obligation on electricity distributors to provide fire and other safety notices prior to disconnecting a property for non-payment. The relevant provisions of the DSC (sections 4.2.1.1 and 4.2.1.2) are reproduced in Appendix A to this Bulletin for convenience. A copy of the Fire Safety Notice of the Fire Marshall is attached as Appendix B to this Bulletin, and is also available on the Board's website at [www.oeb.gov.on.ca](http://www.oeb.gov.on.ca).

This Bulletin is being issued as a reminder to licensed electricity distributors of the importance of ensuring compliance with this obligation, which serves an important public safety purpose.

I expect that, in accordance with section 4.2.1 of the DSC, each electricity distributor will ensure that the business process for disconnection documented in its Conditions of Service includes a reference to the provision of the fire and other public safety notices. I also expect that each electricity distributor will ensure that staff involved in the

disconnection of premises are aware of the distributor's obligations regarding the provision of those notices.

Please direct any questions you may have on this matter to the Market Participant hotline at 416-440-7604 or by e-mail at [market.operations@oeb.gov.on.ca](mailto:market.operations@oeb.gov.on.ca).

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Brian Hewson  
Chief Compliance Officer  
Ontario Energy Board

No statutory power of decision has been delegated to the Chief Compliance Officer, and the views expressed in this Compliance Bulletin are not binding on the Board. The Chief Compliance Officer may seek enforcement action by the Board under Part VII.1 of the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998*, in relation to non-compliance.

## APPENDIX A

### Distribution System Code - Section 4.2

## Distribution System Code

- 4.1.7 A distributor may require that any consumer or customer condition that adversely affects the distribution system be corrected immediately by the consumer or customer at the consumer's or customer's cost.
- 4.1.8 A distributor may direct a consumer or customer connected to its distribution system to take corrective or preventive action on the consumer's or customer's electric system when there is a direct hazard to the public or the consumer or customer is causing or could cause adverse effects to the reliability of the distributor's distribution system. If the situation is not corrected, the distributor may disconnect the consumer or customer in accordance with its disconnection policy.

### 4.2 Disconnection and Reconnection

- 4.2.1 A distributor shall establish a process for disconnection and reconnection that specifies timing and means of notification consistent with the Electricity Act, 1998. In developing physical and business processes for reconnection, a distributor shall consider safety and reliability as a primary requirement. A distributor shall document its business process for disconnection in the distributor's Conditions of Service.
- 4.2.1.1 Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, prior to disconnecting a property for non-payment, a distributor shall provide to any person that, according to the distributor's Conditions of Service, receives notice of the disconnection:
- (a) the Fire Safety Notice of the Office of the Fire Marshal; and
  - (b) any other public safety notices or information bulletins issued by public safety authorities and provided to the distributor, which provide information to consumers respecting dangers associated with the disconnection of electricity service.
- 4.2.1.2 A distributor shall include a copy of the notices or bulletins referred to in s. 4.2.1.1 along with any notice of disconnection that is left at the property at the time of actual disconnection for non-payment.
- 4.2.2 A distributor shall inform a customer responsible for an overdue amount that it may be disconnected in accordance with section 31(2) of the *Electricity Act, 1998*.

APPENDIX B

Fire Safety Notice

## Fire Safety Notice

For Homes, Apartments and Businesses

### Warning/Caution

**While the electricity is off, take care when using alternative lighting, cooking and heating equipment. Review the following information and take precautions to make sure everyone stays safe.**

#### Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms

These alarms are essential for your family's safety. Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms electrically connected to your home's power supply will not work when the electricity is off, unless they have battery back-ups. Test your smoke alarms to find out if they work.

Make sure your home has a battery-operated smoke alarm on every level and a battery-operated carbon monoxide alarm. You are responsible for notifying your landlord that the dwelling is without electricity.

#### Home Escape Planning and Emergency Communication

Inform everyone in your home about the fire safety rules they must follow. Conduct regular safety checks of each room and keep a watchful eye on children and older adults. Make sure everyone knows they must leave the building immediately in event of fire. Practice your escape plan. Have at least one telephone (not cordless) that works during a power failure.

#### Heating and Cooking

Make sure electric stove elements, ovens, kettles, frying pans, clothes irons, hair-dryers, etc., are OFF or unplugged to prevent fires from starting when the electricity is restored.

Think carefully before you bring a fuel-burning appliance into your home. Any device that burns fuel requires oxygen to burn properly and ventilation to remove the deadly products of combustion. Carbon monoxide is produced by any device fuelled by natural gas, propane, heating oil, kerosene, coal, charcoal, gasoline or wood. It is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas that can be deadly.

A public safety message from the **Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services**

For additional fire safety tips:

Contact Your Local Fire Department



Ce document est disponible en français.

#### Alternative Lighting

- Use flashlights or chemical light sticks instead of candles or lanterns to reduce fire risks.

#### Matches and Lighters

- Keep all matches and lighters out of sight and reach of children, preferably locked away.

#### Candles

- Place in secure candleholders, protected by a glass chimney.

- Keep candles away from all combustible materials, such as draperies, paper, etc.

- Place them out of reach of children and pets.

- Avoid walking with a lit candle or taking it into a closet or similar area to look for things.

- Extinguish candles when you leave the room or go to sleep.

- Never leave them unattended.

#### Lanterns and Oil Lamps

- Place lamps and lanterns in a secure place where they cannot be knocked over by children or pets.

- Keep them away from combustibles and windy areas.

- Refill lamps and lanterns outdoors away from combustibles and other people.

- Before going to sleep, make sure that all lamps are out.

#### Portable Space Heaters

- Use only portable space heaters that have been designed for indoor, and where applicable residential use.

- Before using one, review the manufacturer's recommendations for usage and follow the instructions carefully. Only use the fuel for which the appliance is designed.

- Provide adequate ventilation by opening a window slightly, when the heater is in use.

- Before refueling, turn off the heater, wait for it to cool and take the heater outside to refill.

- Keep all heaters at least 1 m (3 feet) away from combustible materials including drapes, carpeting and furniture.

- Turn portable space heaters off when you are not in the room and before going to sleep.

#### Woodstoves and Fireplaces

- If you have not used the fireplace or woodstove for a long time, have it checked by a professional technician before using it. The chimney may be blocked or damaged, which could cause a fire or a build-up of carbon monoxide inside the building.

- Always empty ashes into a covered metal container and store them outside, away from combustibles.

**Propane and charcoal barbecues** should be used outside only. Do not bring them inside the building.

#### Loss of Heat

When a building's heating system is inoperative, water supplies, sanitary systems, fire sprinklers, standpipe hose systems and portable fire extinguishers, amongst other things, may freeze. Freezing can make this equipment inoperative and cause damage. Precautions must be taken to prevent this from happening.

#### Portable Generators

- Portable generators should be used outdoors only. They should be carefully placed outside to ensure that fumes do not enter the building.

- Generators and hot gases should be kept away from combustibles.

- Store fuel for the generator outside in an approved container a safe distance away from the building and generator.

- Refuel only after shutting it down and letting it cool. Follow manufacturer's recommendations regarding use.

- Hire a licensed electrical contractor or electrician to install the unit. Have the installation inspected by the Electrical Safety Authority.

#### Fire and Life Safety Systems

Without electricity, fire and life safety systems may not operate as originally designed. The fire alarm system, voice communication system, emergency lighting, fire sprinkler system, standpipe and hose system, and other fire and life safety features rely on electricity to operate appropriately. Some fire and life safety systems are equipped with a secondary source of power consisting of batteries. When the power is depleted in these batteries, the system or equipment will no longer work. **The Ontario Fire Code, O. Reg. 388/97 as amended, stipulates that such systems must be maintained in operating condition at all times.** Should the power not be promptly restored or where an alternative electrical power supply is not provided, occupant safety and property are at risk from fire.

#### Alternative Measures

Review the buildings' approved "Fire Safety Plan". Occupants must know the fire and life safety practices they must follow. The local Chief Fire Official must be contacted where applicable to determine approved alternative measures. These measures are to be implemented for the life safety of building occupants when fire and life safety systems are inoperative or impaired.