



Ontario Energy Board

Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario

Frequently Asked Questions

Ban on Disconnection of Homes this Winter for Customers of Electricity Utilities

Introduction

On February 23, 2017, the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) issued a Decision and Order banning electricity utilities from disconnecting homes for non-payment during the rest of this winter. Here are some Frequently Asked Questions that relate to this topic.

What does the OEB's order mean for customers?

The OEB's order bans electricity utilities from disconnecting or threatening to disconnect homes for non-payment for the balance of this winter (to April 30, 2017), and also requires that homes be reconnected as soon as possible without charge. For this winter we have also banned the use of load control devices on homes and required electricity utilities to remove existing devices on homes as soon as possible, again without charge. Electricity utilities are also not allowed to ask residential customers to pay account collection fees during the disconnection ban.

What is a load control device?

It is a device that limits how much power – or when power – goes to a home. Some electricity utilities use load control devices as an alternative to disconnection.

How does the OEB define 'winter' for purposes of the disconnection ban?

The OEB has provided for the ban on disconnection to last through to April 30th of this year. This date was chosen by the OEB to take into account that winter can be longer in some parts of the Province than in others.

Does the OEB's order mean customers will now be reconnected?

Yes. The OEB has ordered electricity utilities to reconnect homes that are currently disconnected for non-payment. They must do that as soon as possible and at no charge. Other new measures include the prompt removal of load control devices that have been installed on homes as an alternative to disconnection, and a prohibition on the installation of new devices during the disconnection ban.

Will those who are reconnected have to pay a fee?

Not for reconnecting them now in accordance with the OEB's order.

How long will it take for disconnected customers to be reconnected?

The OEB has ordered electricity utilities to reconnect homes as soon as possible.

Reconnection times will vary by utility according to their size and individual circumstances, and at all times safety concerns will need to be respected. We have made it clear that reconnection is a priority, and we will be closely monitoring the pace of reconnection on a weekly basis. We will act as needed to ensure that the process delivers results for customers in each utility's service area.

If a residential customer is currently disconnected they should contact their electricity utility. If they are unable to resolve the issue with their utility, they should contact us directly at 1-877-632-2727.

Does the disconnection ban apply to customers that have a contract with an energy retailer?

Yes. The OEB's order applies to all residential customers that are served by an electricity utility, even if they have a contract with an energy retailer.

How many Ontario homes are disconnected now?

According to recent data gathered by the OEB from electricity utilities, approximately 930 residential premises across the Province have been disconnected. In addition, there are roughly 3,000 residential premises that have load control devices in place. These are the customers who are the focus of the OEB's reconnection order.