

Assurances of Voluntary Compliance

The Ontario Energy Board's (OEB) mandate is to protect consumer interests. The OEB closely monitors regulated energy companies and investigates when we think they may have broken the rules. If we find that an energy company has broken the rules, there are a range of actions we can take, including negotiating an Assurance of Voluntary Compliance (AVC).

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What is an AVC?

Should the OEB find that a regulated energy company has broken the rules, the OEB may ask for or negotiate an Assurance of Voluntary Compliance with the company. Once it is received by the OEB, it has the same force and effect as an OEB order. AVC's include a commitment by the regulated entity to take remedial action to prevent future non-compliance. An AVC may also include appropriate redress for any customer impacted and/or impose an administrative monetary penalty (AMP). An AVC is one of a range of compliance actions the OEB can take to enforce the rules with regulated companies.

How does an AVC protect consumers?

An AVC is one tool available to the OEB to address non-compliance by regulated entities. An AVC can encourage regulated entities to evaluate their own operations to ensure they are in compliance. AVCs along with other types of compliance action are a means by which the OEB reinforces the importance of compliance and builds energy companies' awareness and understanding of the rules which can result in increased compliance and minimize future contraventions. This, in turn, will enhance public and market confidence that the OEB is protecting consumers' interests.

Do AVCs require credits or payments to customers?

In some instances, an AVC may require the regulated energy company to provide an on-bill credit or payment to customers who were affected by the company's noncompliance, such as cases where there may have been overcharges because of a billing error; or a noncompliant disconnection. In such cases, OEB would require the company advise affected consumers of the noncompliance and what corrective actions have been taken.

In cases where the noncompliance results in small per-customer credit amounts, the AVC may require the amount to be donated to the [Low-income Energy Assistance Program](#) (LEAP) in the company's service area. LEAP is a financial assistance program designed to help qualified customers who are behind on their electricity or natural gas bill and face having their service disconnected.

Where do the administrative penalties paid to the OEB go?

The purpose of the AMP is to promote compliance. AMP amounts are used to fund activities in the public interest such as consumer education and outreach programs and facilitating innovation.

In fiscal year 2024-2025, the OEB used these funds toward the following initiatives:

- Indigenous scholarship program – Together with Indspire, a national charity dedicated to investing in the education of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, the OEB will award two \$7,000 scholarships to students who are enrolled in Ontario post-secondary education and pursuing studies relevant to careers in the energy sector.
- The Innovation Sandbox Challenge – The OEB continues to provide funding of \$1.46 million to six projects to support innovation in the energy sector.
- The OEB's Consumer Panel – the OEB's Consumer Panel (Panel), also known as the OEB Power Panel, is made up of 2,000 residential and 200 small business consumers across Ontario. Through the Panel, the OEB can gain deeper insights into the priorities and perspectives of energy consumers, ensuring their voices are reflected in our work.

Further to the OEB's [Compliance Report \(April 2024 to March 2025\)](#), during this fiscal year period:

- **775** consumer complaints were received
- **327** consumer complaints were escalated for detailed review and analysis, where initial screening identified potential non-compliance issues
- **65** compliance reviews were started, many of which were initiated due to a consumer complaint
- **20** inspections were completed and **16** AVCs were issued resulting in:
 - **\$191,200** in administrative penalties paid under AVC, and
 - **\$65,896** in additional utility funds contributed to the Low-income Energy Assistance Program, which provides emergency funding for low-income consumers.

Additional Resources

Learn more about:

- [The OEB's Compliance and Enforcement Actions.](#)
- [How to make a complaint.](#)