

Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. ®



We provide free legal aid to people with civil legal problems in western New York.

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Utility Shutoffs During COVID-19

What happens if I can't afford my utility bills right now?

New York State has taken steps to ensure that any customers affected by COVID-19 will not lose power or heat due to financial hardship. Per Governor Cuomo's March 13, 2020 directive, all energy and water utilities operating under the state's authority have been ordered to halt terminations of service for both commercial and residential customers throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result, major energy utility providers including NYSEG, RG&E, and National Grid have suspended terminations of service to customers for matters arising from inability to pay. Similarly, many private water service providers have also ceased service disconnections because of customers' inability to pay.

What if I can still afford my utility bills? Does this mean I don't have to pay?

No, this does not mean you do not have to pay. If you are able, you should pay your utility bills as they come due.

How do I know if my utility provider has agreed to suspend shutoffs?

This moratorium does not apply to municipal or publicly owned water or utility providers. If you have questions about whether your specific water or utility provider has agreed to halt shutoffs, you should reach out to them directly.

While not an exhaustive list, some major utility providers who have agreed to suspend shutoffs include:

- New York State Electric & Gas (NYSEG)
-

Rochester Gas & Electric (RG&E) / Avangrid

- National Grid
- Con Edison

What if my service provider is threatening to shut off my utilities anyway?

If your service provider is threatening you with a utility shutoff, you should call our office.

What if my utilities have already been shut off by my service provider?

If your utilities have been disconnected in violation of the moratorium, please call our office. You can also file an emergency complaint with the Public Service Commission by calling 1-800-342-3355.

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