

## Cold Weather Rule

The “Cold Weather Rule” (Minnesota Statute 216B.097) as it’s commonly called helps cooperative members with utility bills during winter months. From October 15<sup>th</sup> until April 15<sup>th</sup> a Cooperative cannot disconnect a customer if it would affect that person’s primary heat source. Provided the customer:

- 1) declares to the Cooperative an inability to pay.
- 2) has total household income less than 50% of the State median income.
- 3) has a current account balance of 0 for the billing period prior to October 15<sup>th</sup> or have entered into a payment schedule and are reasonably current with their payments.

Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during cold weather months, the Cooperative will provide the following information to the customer:

- 1) a notice of the proposed disconnection
- 2) a statement of the customer’s rights and responsibilities.
- 3) a list of local energy assistance providers.
- 4) forms on which to declare an inability to pay.
- 5) a statement explaining payment plan options and other opportunities to continue utility service.

Any residential customer may be reconnected if:

- 1) the outstanding balance is paid.
- 2) a mutually accepted payment schedule is arranged.

Further restrictions include:

- 1) Disconnection will not occur prior to 20 days after the notice of disconnection was mailed or prior to 15 days after the notice of disconnection was personally delivered.
- 2) If the member fails to respond to the disconnect notice, Renville-Sibley personnel will investigate the status of occupancy. If occupied, Renville-Sibley shall inform the occupants of their rights and responsibilities and provide an adequate notice to disconnect.
- 3) Member appeals of involuntary disconnection will delay disconnection proceedings subject to dispute review and resolution by an appointed committee of Renville-Sibley’s Board of Directors

The Cooperative will notify all members, prior to October 15<sup>th</sup> of each year, of it’s implemented “Cold Weather Rule”. Provided below are the names and addresses of human service agencies or local energy assistance providers that may be helpful in assisting with member’s electric bills.

Renville County Energy Assistance

320-523-5522 (Olivia)

Minnesota Valley Action Council

800-767-7139 (Mankato) or 507-237-2981 (Gaylord)

Heartland Community Action

320-235-0850 (Willmar)

Western Community Action

800-658-2480 (Jackson) or 800-658-2448 (Marshall)