



# Code of Practice for Customer Billing and Disconnection

[electricireland.ie](http://electricireland.ie)

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**Ireland**

This Code of Practice outlines the billing information, payment options and debt collection policies of Electric Ireland. This Code applies to all our customers, both residential and business.

## Billing information

Electric Ireland issues bills on a two monthly basis to residential and small business customers. Larger business customers may receive monthly bills where appropriate.

Your bill is calculated on the basis of meter reading(s) and other data supplied by the **relevant Network Operator\***. Customer readings may be used where provided.

Electric Ireland will provide support to industry initiatives to improve the quality of meter reading by advising customers (through messages on the bill or information leaflets) of the importance of providing the **relevant Network Operator** with access to meters.

Your bill will contain detailed information (including tariffs, standing charges, other service charges, VAT and levies) on the amount of energy to be charged to your account and any debit or credit balances from previous bills and, where relevant, any allowances to which you may be entitled, such as Free Electricity Allowance. Your bill will also show the period(s) you are being billed for, as well as the date of issue and the date that payment is due.

Electric Ireland will issue scheduled bills to customers no later than one month after the receipt of meter reading data for

the billing period involved, except in situations where the customer has agreed otherwise, or where meter reading data appears incorrect.

Electric Ireland will notify customers directly of any increase in charges at an appropriate time, no later than one billing period after the increase comes into effect. The changes will be clearly indicated on the bill and the method of application will be explained on the bill, in an accompanying insert or in a letter.

Where bills are proportionally calculated at a tariff change, this will be indicated on the bill and the way in which it was done will be explained on the bill, in an accompanying insert or in a letter.

We will provide additional information on our bills such as details of:

- ▶ Contact numbers for Electric Ireland, and the **relevant Network Operators**
- ▶ Meter Point Data provided by the **relevant Network Operators**
- ▶ Our complaints handling procedure
- ▶ Contact details for the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)

Electric Ireland may provide bills to customers in an electronic format where available, and in agreement with the customer. All provisions of this Code of Practice will apply to this bill format also.

**\*For electricity customers this is ESB Networks, for gas customers this is Gas Networks Ireland.**

## Closing your account

You may be closing your home or business account for the following reasons:

- ▶ Moving out of home or business premises
- ▶ Change of occupancy
- ▶ Disconnecting your premises if it is unoccupied for a long period of time or is due to be demolished

In the above instances it is important that you contact us and provide us with the following information:

- ▶ Your name and account number
- ▶ The date you will be moving out
- ▶ The final meter reading
- ▶ Your forwarding address

To agree a transfer meter reading with the new owner, occupant or landlord, we will need the new occupant's name and phone number (or the landlord, solicitor or estate agent's name and number), if available.

In the event that you cannot provide a reading or access to de-energise the premises, we will estimate the closing reading and any charges arising from this estimate must be accepted by you as the due amount on your final bill.

A fee will apply to any disconnection or reconnection carried out at the customer's request. We will use this information to issue your final bill.

## What to do

Call us on 1850 372 372 when you're about to move.

## Disconnection procedure

Electric Ireland wants all customers to have continued access to energy. We work to ensure that withdrawal of supply happens only as a last resort, and have committed as part of The Energy Engage Code to never disconnect an engaging customer.

We make every effort to:

- ▶ Contact customers by letter or phone regarding their overdue accounts. This will include at least two attempts to contact the customer by notice in writing; at least two additional attempts to contact the customer, where available - this could be by telephone, email or text message - in advance of issuing any formal request to disconnect a customer. Each attempt to contact the customer will take place no less than 3 working days apart
- ▶ Train our staff to deal with sensitive and difficult circumstances
- ▶ Determine a customer's ability to pay
- ▶ Agree an appropriate payment arrangement which suits the customer's circumstances, while avoiding a situation where the debt becomes worse. Where appropriate, and with the express agreement of the customer, this may include arranging to have a pre-payment meter or budget controller installed
- ▶ Refer the customer for guidance to their local MABS office or local Community Welfare Officer, where circumstances call for it. Business customers can also nominate a financial advisor to assist if required
- ▶ Find out about any exceptional circumstances, such as special needs,

which may require registration as required in the Code of Practice for Special Services

After exhausting all other options, Electric Ireland may request the relevant Network Operator to withdraw supply from a customer, subject to 10 working days' notice in writing, and in accordance with the ESB Networks De-energisation Code of Practice or the Gas Networks Ireland Disconnection Code of Practice as suitable, where:

- ▶ The customer has not engaged with us to genuinely resolve the arrears on their account
- ▶ The customer's account has not been paid in agreement with the terms of their contract
- ▶ The customer does not agree to a payment arrangement or breaks an agreed arrangement
- ▶ The customer refuses the installation of a pre-pay meter or budget controller
- ▶ The customer does not engage / respond to any of our correspondence / communications
- ▶ The customer requests us to do so. In this instance, the person making the disconnection request must be the registered account holder or have the express permission of the account holder to disconnect the supply. In this instance also, arrears will still be recouped and standing charges may still apply
- ▶ There is no registered occupant at the premises. If the existing registered

account holder has closed their account and Electric Ireland is still supplying the premises, we will issue a separate notice to the premises, in writing by letter, and at least 10 working days for gas accounts in advance of a formal request to disconnect the premises, due to no account holder being registered

- ▶ Note: In the event of an emergency, or where a safety issue arises, or where interference is suspected, or for operational reasons where appropriate - the relevant Network Operator may disconnect a customer without notice
- ▶ Gas Networks Ireland believe there is no active gas supplier at the premises



The notice to customers which warns of the impending disconnection will be sent in writing and will specify:

- ▶ That 10 working days' notice, including the reason for disconnection, is being given with our intention to request the relevant Network Operator to disconnect for non-payment
- ▶ The costs associated with the disconnection and reconnection of the supply
- ▶ That arrears may not be paid to the person(s) carrying out the disconnection
- ▶ Contact details for Electric Ireland Credit Control staff to discuss settlement terms
- ▶ Contact details for a nominated support agency to be agreed with CRU as appropriate e.g. MABS
- ▶ Note: No disconnection calls will be made on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, eve of a Public Holiday or a Public Holiday

In accordance with the Code of Practice for Special Services, if it is discovered that a customer qualifies under the Code, then we will advise the customer to make an application to register. In addition, we will seek to make a payment arrangement with the customer as an alternative to disconnection.

### Note: **FOR BUSINESS CUSTOMERS**

Electric Ireland's intention to disconnect supply is subject to providing the customer with 5 working days' notice in writing of our intention to request disconnection from the relevant Network Operator. However, for any business customer where, in our opinion, there is a high risk of impending default, the disconnection notice period may be reduced to 2 days.

## Customers will not have their supply withdrawn where:

- ▶ The customer offers to settle any outstanding bill (including arrears) within an agreed timescale and keeps that commitment
- ▶ The customer agrees and keeps to a payment arrangement to clear their account by instalments over a reasonable period of time
- ▶ The customer or a member of the household is dependent on recognised emergency medical equipment powered by electricity and has registered with us as an approved customer
- ▶ The customer has registered elderly status (for the period from 1st November to 31st March)
- ▶ The customer is pursuing a complaint using Electric Ireland's complaint handling procedures and the complaint is related to the reason for disconnection
- ▶ The bill is based on an irregular estimate which does not line up with previous readings or usage history, unless we obtain a reading for the meter in question
- ▶ The outstanding amount is not related to the supply of electricity or gas
- ▶ Customer has agreed to the installation of a PAYG meter

## Reconnection of supply

Where the supply has been disconnected and the customer (or their representative) reaches a settlement with Electric Ireland, the supply will be reconnected as soon as possible in agreement with our standard terms and conditions and in agreement with the Network Operators Reconnection Schedule.

As part of the reconnection process we will review account status with each customer, taking account of individual circumstances to establish necessary steps to improving the customer's credit worthiness. We may require provision of a security deposit or other such measure until the customer has met the normal credit terms for a period of 12 months continuously. We will set these conditions out in writing for the customer, including how any associated deposit will be repaid.

All complaints will be resolved through Electric Ireland's Complaints Handling Procedure. The Complaints Handling Procedure is a separate Code of Practice which has been approved by CRU.

If we fail to meet any of the commitments outlined in this Code then the customer may be entitled to compensation under the terms of our Customer Charter.

Copies of our Customer Charter and other Codes can be obtained in the following ways:

By phone: 1850 372 372 (8am – 8pm  
Monday to Saturday)

By post: Electric Ireland  
PO Box 841,  
South City Delivery Office,  
Togher,  
Cork

By email: [service@electricireland.ie](mailto:service@electricireland.ie)

Online: [www.electricireland.ie/  
customercharter](http://www.electricireland.ie/customercharter)

## Payment options

Electric Ireland makes paying your energy bills as easy as possible by offering customers a wide range of convenient payment channels. Our general payment terms are 14 days from the date of issue on your bill, or immediately if your bill issues with arrears. However, certain price plans may have more specific payment terms. The following is a list of our current payment options:

- ▶ Payment by Direct Debit
- ▶ Payment by Laser or Visa Debit Card via our website or by phoning 1850 372 372
- ▶ Payment by Household Budget

- ▶ Payment over the counter e.g. at any PayZone, PostPoint or An Post outlet
- ▶ Postal payment by cheque
- ▶ Payment by bank giro (where available)
- ▶ ATM or electronic payment (where available)

You must pay your bill to the specific payment conditions of your chosen Price Plan. If you pay us by Direct Debit, we reserve the right to change our Direct Debit collection date and we will notify you in advance of doing this.

## Payment difficulties and arrangements

Electric Ireland is sensitive to the specific circumstances of all of our customers and we understand there are times when financial hardship might affect customers' ability to pay. We are committed to helping customers who are experiencing genuine difficulties in paying their bills and will work with customers and welfare agencies as required, by:

- ▶ Advising customers to contact us at an early stage if they are experiencing difficulty making payment on their bill
- ▶ Offering an arrangement to pay an agreed amount by instalments or the installation of a PAYG meter
- ▶ Working with such agencies nominated by the customer to resolve their financial difficulty e.g. MABS

This Code has been approved by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU).  
CRU's Energy Customer Care Team can be contacted by phone at 1890 404 404  
or by visiting [customer care@cru.ie](mailto:customer care@cru.ie)