

As a residential consumer of electricity and natural gas in Ontario, you have both rights and responsibilities. Electricity and natural gas companies must respect your rights while you must fulfil your responsibilities. The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) ensures that your rights are respected.

Your RIGHTS include:

You have the right to safe & reliable service

Your utility is responsible for the safe connection of your home to their distribution network and for providing you with safe and reliable service without unreasonable interruption. As part of this service, your utility is required to make necessary repairs, replacements and improvements to their equipment.

You have the right to accurate & timely bills

Your utility is required to issue accurate and timely bills, but billing errors may occur at times. You should know that:

- You can question the accuracy of your bill.
- If you were overbilled, your utility must credit you with the amount mistakenly billed, for a period of up to **two years**.

You have the right to fair security deposit policies

To secure payment of future charges, your utility can ask for a security deposit when you initially apply for service or if you fail to maintain a good payment history.

You should know that:

- You have the right to pay your electricity utility the required security deposit in equal instalments over a **six-month period**. Gas utilities generally provide this option to their customers as well.
- You have the right to get your deposit back once you have shown **one year** of good payment history.

You have the right to fair disconnection & reconnection practices

Your utility can disconnect your service for a number of reasons such as failing to pay your security deposit, failing to pay your bill or failing to follow through on payment arrangements. You should know that:

- You have the right to advance written notice of disconnection that should contain information about the disconnection process, including the dates between which the service can be disconnected and available payment options to avoid the pending disconnection.
- You have the right to a timely reconnection of your service once you have made the required payment. In most cases, utilities are required to reconnect services within **two business days** from receipt of required payments.

You have the right to access available energy conservation programs

Utilities offer programs that can help you reduce your energy use and lower your overall household costs. You should know that you have the right to access available energy conservation programs delivered by your utilities in your area.

Your electricity and natural gas companies

Electricity & Natural Gas Utilities (also known as distributors):

Utilities are responsible for delivering electricity and natural gas (energy) to your home at a rate approved by the OEB. Your utilities are determined by where your property is located. Their services include planning, construction, operation and maintenance of their respective distribution networks. They are also responsible for supplying your energy unless you choose to buy your energy from an electricity retailer and a gas marketer under contract. For most consumers, the electricity and natural gas prices charged by utilities are set by the OEB.

Unit Sub-meter Providers: If you live in a condo or an apartment that has its own individual meter and your electricity bill comes from a company other than the local electricity utility, you are a customer of a unit sub-meter provider. Unit sub-meter providers' responsibilities are similar to those of electricity utilities.

Electricity Retailers & Gas Marketers (also known as energy retailers):

In Ontario, you have the option of buying your electricity and natural gas from your utilities or from electricity retailers and gas marketers, if you sign a retail contract. The prices charged by electricity retailers and gas marketers are not set by the OEB. You will pay the price you and the company agreed to in the contract. The retail contract covers only some parts of your bill. You will still continue to pay other charges to your utility.

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Your RIGHTS include:

You have the right to fair, reasonable & timely complaint resolution processes

Electricity and natural gas companies are required to handle complaints in a fair, reasonable and timely manner. If you have a complaint about your electricity or natural gas company, you should contact them and try to work it out with them first. If your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you can contact the OEB or file a complaint. The OEB will work with you and the company to facilitate the resolution of your complaint.

You have the right to personal privacy

Your electricity and natural gas company must protect your personal information and not share it with anyone without proper permission.

ADDITIONAL RIGHTS:

If you choose to purchase electricity or natural gas from energy retailers, you should know that you have additional rights. Electricity retailers and gas marketers must follow laws and rules that protect consumers from unfair or misleading business practices. Contact the OEB for more information.

Your RESPONSIBILITIES include:

Payments

- You are responsible to pay your security deposits.
- You are responsible to pay your bill on time. If unable to pay your bill, you should contact your utility to find out if you qualify for financial assistance or partial payment plans.

Utility equipment

- You are responsible to provide your utility with unobstructed access to their equipment such as meters.
- You must not damage or tamper with utility equipment.
- It is important that you notify your utility of unsafe utility equipment.

Notice of move & service termination

- It is important that you give your utility advance notice before you move or wish to have your service(s) disconnected.



For more information or to file a complaint, contact the OEB using any of the following methods:

Call

- 1-877-632-2727
- 416-314-2455
- 1-844-621-9977 (TTY)

Write

Ontario Energy Board
P.O. Box 2319
2300 Yonge Street, 27th Floor
Toronto, ON M4P 1E4

Online

Complete an online form:

oeb.ca

Email:

ConsumerRelations@oeb.ca

Assistance Programs

A number of special programs are available in Ontario to help low-income energy consumers. You need to meet certain criteria to qualify for these programs. Contact your utility or the OEB for more information.

This document is available in French and in large-print format.

Ce document est aussi disponible en français.

This document is available in other languages upon request