

**Ontario Energy
Board**

P.O. Box 2319
2300 Yonge Street
27th Floor
Toronto ON M4P 1E4
Telephone: 416-481-1967
Facsimile: 416-440-7656
Toll free: 1-888-632-6273

**Commission de l'énergie
de l'Ontario**

C.P. 2319
2300, rue Yonge
27^e étage
Toronto ON M4P 1E4
Téléphone: 416-481-1967
Télécopieur: 416-440-7656
Numéro sans frais: 1-888-632-6273



VIA E-MAIL & WEB POSTING

May 1, 2017

To: *All Licensed Electricity Distributors*

Re: **Customer protection rules remain in effect with end of the ban on winter electricity disconnections**

The ban on disconnections and the use of load limiters by licensed electricity distributors in the case of non-payment by residential customers ends today. The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) understands from reporting by distributors that they have made reconnection of residential customers or the removal of load limiters a priority since the ban came into effect on February 24, 2017.

With the end of the ban, the OEB is writing to remind distributors that they should be customer focused in their approach to any pending disconnections of residential customers for non-payment, and to ensure that they must continue to follow the rules set out in the Distribution System Code (DSC), including:

- the minimum notice requirement of 10 days, or 60 days in cases where the customer has provided the medical documentation required by the DSC;
- the form and content of the disconnection notice, including:
 - payment options;
 - how customers can enter into a repayment plan, as well as the special programs available to eligible low-income energy customers; and
 - the window of time during which the disconnection may occur;
- the requirement to make reasonable efforts to contact the customer by telephone or in person 48 hours prior to the disconnection and to provide the customer with specified information at that time;
- the requirement to offer credit card as well as identify other available payment options at the time of disconnection; and,
- the reconnection of customers within two business days once payment has been made or an arrears payment agreement has been entered into.

Distributors are strongly encouraged to work with customers facing disconnection to find solutions that achieve the best possible outcome for those customers, including providing information and payment options to maintain the customer's connection.

The OEB also asks that distributors ensure that information is posted on their website regarding the disconnection process, how to avoid disconnection, and about both LEAP and the Ontario Electricity Support Program. In accordance with the DSC, distributors must suspend disconnection when advised that the customer is being assessed for assistance by a LEAP intake agency, and the OEB expects distributors to provide timely responses to verification questions from these agencies.

To assist distributors and discuss expectations moving forward, the OEB will hold a webinar on Wednesday May 3, 2017 beginning at 11:00 a.m. Details are provided in the attachment and will be available on the OEB's website.

All issues related to disconnection will be a high priority in the OEB's upcoming review of the customer service rules for both natural gas and electricity distributors. Our goal is to ensure that Ontario energy customers are protected and well-served by a financially viable energy sector.

Yours truly,

Original signed by

Brian Hewson
Vice President, Consumer Protection & Industry Performance

Attachment: May 3rd webinar details