

CUSTOMER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO AVOID SHUT OFF OF ELECTRIC SERVICE FOR NONPAYMENT

1. What can I do if I receive a notice from Chariton Valley Electric that says my electric service will be shut off because I have a past due bill?

- a. Pay the bill in full; or
- b. Enter into a reasonable payment plan with Chariton Valley Electric (see #2 below); or
- c. Apply for and become eligible for low-income energy assistance (see #3 below); or
- d. Give Chariton Valley Electric a written statement from a doctor or public health official stating that shutting off your electric service would pose an “especial” health danger for a person living at the residence (see #4 below); or
- e. Tell Chariton Valley Electric if you think part of the amount shown on the bill is wrong. However, you must still pay the part of the bill you agree you owe Chariton Valley Electric (see #5 below).

2. How do I go about making a reasonable payment plan? (Residential Customers Only)

- a. Contact Chariton Valley Electric as soon as you know you cannot pay the amount you owe. If you cannot pay all the money you owe at one time, Chariton Valley Electric may offer you a payment plan that spreads payments evenly over at least 12 months. The plan may be longer depending on your financial situation.
- b. If you have not made the payments you promised in a previous payment plan with Chariton Valley Electric and still owe money, you may qualify for a second payment agreement under certain conditions.
- c. If you do not make the payments you promise, Chariton Valley Electric may shut off your utility service on one day’s notice unless all the money you owe Chariton Valley Electric is paid or you enter into another payment agreement.

3. How do I apply for low-income energy assistance? (Residential Customers Only)

- a. Contact the local community action agency in your area:
 - Appanoose County**, 111 N. Main Street, Suite 1, Centerville, IA 52544; Phone: 641 856-8437
 - Lucas County**, 117 S. Grand, P.O.Box 276, Chariton, IA 50049; Phone: (641) 774-5323
 - Marion County**, 3014 E. Main, P.O. Box 719, Knoxville, IA 50138; Phone: (641) 842-6571
 - Monroe County**, 101 S. Clinton St., P.O. Box 271, Albia, IA 52531; Phone: (641) 932-5107
 - Wapello County**, 226 West Main St., P.O. Box 658, Ottumwa, IA 52501; Phone: (641) 682-8741
 - Wayne County**, 100 E. Jefferson, P.O. Box 384, Corydon, IA 50060; Phone: (641) 872-1282; or

- b. Contact the Division of Community Action Agencies at the Iowa Department of Human Rights, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319; telephone (515) 281-0859. To prevent disconnection, you must contact Chariton Valley Electric prior to disconnection of your service.

- c. To avoid disconnection, you must apply for energy assistance before your service is shut off. Notify Chariton Valley Electric that you may be eligible and have applied for energy assistance. Once your service has been disconnected, it will not be reconnected based on approval for energy assistance.

- d. Being certified eligible for energy assistance will prevent your electric service from being disconnected from November 1 through April 1.

4. What if someone living at the residence has a serious health condition? (Residential Customers Only)

Contact Chariton Valley Electric if you believe this is the case. Contact your doctor or a public health official and ask the doctor or health official to contact Chariton Valley Electric and state that shutting off your utility service would pose an “especial” health danger for a person living at your residence. The doctor or public health official must provide a written statement to the Chariton Valley Electric office within 5 days of when your doctor or public health official notifies Chariton Valley Electric of the health condition; otherwise, your utility service may be shut off. If Chariton Valley Electric receives this written statement, your service will not be shut off for 30 days. This 30-day delay is to allow you time to arrange payment of your utility bill

or find other living arrangements. After 30 days your service may be shut off if payment arrangements have not been made.

5. What should I do if I believe my bill is not correct?

You may dispute your utility bill. You must tell Chariton Valley Electric that you dispute the bill. You must pay the part of the bill you think is correct. If you do this, Chariton Valley Electric will not shut off your service for 45 days from the date the bill was mailed while you and Chariton Valley Electric work out the dispute over the part of the bill you think is incorrect. You may ask the Iowa Utilities Board for assistance in resolving the dispute. (see #9 below).

6. When can Chariton Valley Electric shut off my utility service because I have not paid my bill?

- a. Chariton Valley Electric can shut off service between the hours of 6 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- b. Chariton Valley Electric will not shut off your service on nights, weekends, or holidays for nonpayment of a bill.
- c. Chariton Valley Electric will not shut off your service if you enter into a reasonable payment plan to pay the overdue amount (see #2).
- d. Chariton Valley Electric will not shut off your service if the temperature is forecasted to be 20 degrees Fahrenheit or colder during the following 24-hour period, including the day your service is scheduled to be shut off.
- e. If you have qualified for low-income energy assistance, Chariton Valley Electric cannot shut off your service from November 1 through April 1. However, you will still owe Chariton Valley Electric for the service used during this time.
- f. Chariton Valley Electric will not shut off your service if you have notified Chariton Valley Electric that you dispute a portion of your bill and you pay the part of the bill that you agree is correct.
- g. If one of the heads of household is a service member deployed from military service, utility service cannot be shut off during the deployment or within 90 days after the end of deployment. For this exception to disconnection to apply, the utility must be informed of the deployment prior to disconnection. However, you will still owe the utility for service used during this time.

7. How will I be told Chariton Valley Electric is going to shut off my electric service?

- a. You must be given a written notice at least 12 days before Chariton Valley Electric service can be shut off for nonpayment. This notice will include the reason for shutting off your service.
- b. If you have not made payments required by an agreed-upon payment plan, you may be disconnected with only one day notice.
- c. Chariton Valley Electric must also try to reach you by telephone or in person before it shuts off your service. From November 1 through April 1, if Chariton Valley Electric cannot reach you by telephone or in person, Chariton Valley Electric will put a written notice on the door of your residence to tell you that your utility service will be shut off.

8. If service is shut off, when will it be turned back on?

- a. Chariton Valley Electric will turn your service back on if you pay the whole amount you owe or agree to a reasonable payment plan (see #2).
- b. If you make your payment during regular business hours, or by 7 p.m. for utilities permitting such payment or other arrangements after regular business hours, Chariton Valley Electric must make a reasonable effort to turn your service back on that day. If service cannot reasonably be turned on that same day, Chariton Valley Electric must do it by 11 a.m. the next day.
- c. Chariton Valley Electric may charge you a fee to turn your service back on. Those fees may be higher in the evening or on weekends, so you may ask that your service be turned on during normal business hours 8:00 am to 4:30 pm.

9. Is there any other help available besides Chariton Valley Electric?

If Chariton Valley Electric has not been able to help you with your problem, you may contact the Iowa Utilities Board toll free at 1-877-565-4450. You may also write the Iowa Utilities Board at 1375 E. Court Avenue, Room 69, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0069, or by E-mail at customer@iub.iowa.gov.

Low income customers may also be eligible for free legal assistance from Iowa Legal Aid and may contact Legal Aid at 1-800-532-1275.