

Perth Energy

Family & Domestic Violence Policy

July 2024



Perth Energy

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1. We're Here to Support You

If there's an immediate threat to your safety, call emergency 000.

Perth Energy is committed to supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of its customers. Perth Energy does not tolerate family and domestic violence.

Perth Energy is committed to supporting all customers who are experiencing or are impacted by family and domestic violence. If you are impacted by family and domestic violence, we'll provide a supportive and confidential environment where you can inform us of your situation and seek the support you need.

We recognise family and domestic violence can happen to anyone, in any postcode and in any community. It can be used by a perpetrator to significantly undermine a person's rights, inhibit their options, undermine their safety, mental and physical health, and limit opportunities for learning and participation, access to material basics and economic wellbeing, relationships, and connections.

When in this situation, your safety, wellbeing, and dignity can be threatened or undermined by the use of violence. We understand that being safe is no individual or simple decision or task. We also know that violence is not the responsibility of the person experiencing it; the responsibility rests solely with the person perpetrating the violence.

Women and children are more often the victims of family and domestic violence and those who use violence are overwhelmingly male. Family and domestic violence can be perpetrated by a partner (current or former), family member, carer, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship relation, housemate, boyfriend, or girlfriend. Family and domestic violence can occur across a diverse range of relationships and communities.

This policy is for all residential customers who are experiencing, or have experienced, family and domestic violence.

So that we can best support you, we invite you to communicate with us about your situation. This can be by any method you feel comfortable with, and you'll find our contact details at the end of this policy and on our website. If you're the account holder, you may want to nominate someone to contact us on your behalf. This may include:

- Financial counsellor;
- Social worker/advocate;
- Family member or friend; or
- Someone who helps you manage your energy bills.

Let us know who your support person or representative is when we speak with you and provide consent for them to act on your behalf. With your approval, we'll engage with them as we would with you, consistent with your consent, instructions and in line with our privacy obligations.

Perth Energy regularly reviews and updates its Family & Domestic Violence Policy to ensure it is in line with best practice and legislative requirements.

2. What is Family & Domestic Violence?

Family and domestic violence can take many forms and may be known as different things such as relationship violence or intimate partner violence.

Family and domestic violence is not limited to physical abuse. Other forms of family and domestic violence can include, but are not limited to:

- Economic or financial abuse: behaviour that is coercive, manipulative or unreasonably controls a person in a way that denies their personal or financial independence – often in a way that involves fear or intimidation, for example by coercing a person to hand over control of assets and income, or forcing a person to put bills under their name and then not taking financial responsibility for expenses incurred;
- Emotional or psychological abuse: behaviour that does not demonstrate respect for someone's feelings, opinions and experiences – for instance, name-calling or ridiculing someone, or threatening to institutionalise a person;
- Sexual abuse: any actual or threatened sexual contact without consent;
- Threatening or coercive behaviour, and/or
- Any other behaviour that controls or dominates you and causes you to fear for your safety or wellbeing, or that of someone else. For instance, isolating a person from their family and/or friends.

3. Respectful Communication

You will always be treated with respect and dignity whenever you interact with us. Our Customer Operations Team have undergone specialised training to help respond to family and domestic violence, in an educated and non-judgemental way. This training covers issues related to family violence and its impacts, including:

- How to identify customers who may be affected by family and domestic violence; and
- How to apply this policy effectively and appropriately to best assist those customers.

Our Customer Operations Team are equipped to identify the particular methods of support that can be tailored to your unique situation. Our first priority when you call will be to check whether you are calling from a safe place. Your safety is our priority.

We can support you by:

- Answering any questions you may have about Perth Energy's Family and Domestic Violence policy;
- Explaining how you are protected from having your electricity supply disconnected;
- Keeping your information secure;
- Assisting customers experiencing payment difficulties due to family and domestic violence;
- Confirming with you and recording your preferred method of communication; and
- Helping you connect with support services that may be better placed to respond to your unique circumstances.

If you are comfortable and safe to do so, we encourage you to confide in us that you are experiencing family and domestic violence so we can quickly and accordingly apply support options to your account. Alternatively, if you are communicating in a way that indicates that you may be experiencing family and domestic violence, our agents have an obligation to verify your safety and determine if we can provide you with further personalised support.

We will take reasonable steps to establish a safe method of communication with you and if a method of communication you propose is not reasonably practicable, we will offer you an alternative method of communication. We will keep a record of any communication method we have agreed with you and use that method of communication.

4. Our Protections and Account Security

We have many ways in which we will provide extra protections for you, for as long as you need. Our methods are designed with your safety in mind and ensure that your personal and account information are protected.

In our interactions with you, we will advise:

- That we must take reasonable steps to protect your information if you request this (see also the section on account security below); and
- About the consequences of being named on the account of residential customer who is not affected by family and domestic violence.

We take our customers' privacy and protecting their personal information seriously. We manage this information in line with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles (APPs).

You can view a copy our Privacy Policy on our website at:

<https://www.perthenergy.com.au/privacy>.

How we handle your information

If you tell us you're experiencing family and domestic violence or we have reason to believe you are affected by it, we'll provide you with personalised assistance to support your safety.

We're focused on keeping your information secure and will talk with you about suitable options to protect your information. Here are some examples of the things we do to protect your information:

System security

Access to your personal information is controlled by access and identity management systems.

Your information is stored in secured systems, within protected data centres. We have technology that prevents malicious software or viruses and unauthorised persons from accessing our systems.

Building security

We use a mix of ID cards, alarms, cameras, guards and other controls to protect our offices and buildings.

Account security

If you disclose that you're experiencing family and domestic violence, we can assign a code word to your account to prevent unauthorised access by the perpetrator. We will protect your account so that when you communicate with us again our Customer Operations team are aware of your circumstances and you won't need to repeat or refer to them.

Our Programs and Services

You can access a range of services to help you take control of your energy usage and Perth Energy account. Everyone's circumstances are different so please let us know if you'd like some help to set these up:

- Perth Energy My Account (access to manage your Perth Energy account online);
- Preferred payment options; and
- Preferred and alternative methods of communication.

5. Payment Assistance

If you're experiencing temporary financial difficulty as a result of family and domestic violence, there's different payment options available to you, including:

- Payment plans;
- Direct debit arrangements;
- BPAY;
- Online payments;
- Centrepay; and
- Payment extensions/deferrals.

Depending on your individual situation, we will consider waiving or reducing some of your debt or any outstanding fees or charges. In determining whether to remove or reduce debt, or any outstanding fees or charges, we will consider, among other things, the potential impact debt collection may have on you and the extent to which another person may have contributed to those amounts.

If we have a right to disconnect your electricity supply for failure to pay a bill, we will always take into account your individual circumstances before arranging for disconnection.

We'll consider your individual financial situation and what you can afford to pay before we make any recommendations – that way, the payment plan or other payment arrangement is tailored to your circumstances.

Once we agree to a payment plan or other payment arrangement, we'll send you information including:

- who to contact for help;
- the amount you'll pay each time; and
- when you need to make your payments (or the frequency of payments).

We will ensure that for at least nine months from when we become aware or believe that you are experiencing family and domestic violence, that your supply of energy is not disconnected unless:

- you no longer reside at the supply address;
- you request the disconnection;
- in an emergency or for health and safety reasons;
- energy is being illegally used at the supply address;
- the disconnection is a planned interruption; or
- you are a pre-payment meter customer (see section below).

Pre-Payment Meter Customers

If you are a pre-payment meter customer who is experiencing family and domestic violence, we will give you advice about:

- the different types of meters available to you including the advantages and disadvantages of each meter type; and
- the process for requesting a different meter type including that there will be no cost to you to replace the pre-payment meter with a standard meter.

We have in place arrangements in place to avoid affected pre-payment meter customers being disconnected and will always consider the provision of financial assistance to you if you are experiencing family and domestic violence.

If you request to replace the pre-payment meter with a standard meter, you will not be charged for the replacement of the meter.

6. External Support

The following external support services may be able to assist with support aligned to your needs and safety requirements. It's not exhaustive, and there are other agencies that may provide similar services.

SERVICES DIRECTLY RELATED TO FAMILY & DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	
AGENCY	CONTACT DETAILS
Police	Phone: 000
Emergency Response (24 hours)	Phone: 000
National 1800 RESPECT Line 24-hour national counselling and support service for anyone impacted by family and domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse.	Phone: 1800 737 732 Website: www.1800respect.org.au/
Women's Domestic Violence Helpline 24-hour state-wide service providing support and counselling for women experiencing family and domestic violence	Phone: 1800 007 339 Website: https://www.wa.gov.au/service/community-services/community-support/womens-domestic-violence-helpline
Ask Izzy Can help you to find the services you need, now and nearby. It is free and anonymous, and you can search over 360,000 services to find housing, meals, healthcare, counselling, legal advice, addiction treatment and more.	Website: www.askizzy.org.au If you're on the Telstra mobile network, you can access Ask Izzy even if you don't have credit.
Sexual Assault Resource Centre Crisis Line A 24-hour statewide service providing emergency services and counselling for people who have experienced both past and recent sexual assault.	Phone: 1800 199 888 Website: https://www.kemh.health.wa.gov.au/Other-Services/SARC/Crisis-services
Men's Domestic Violence Helpline A 24-hour telephone information and referrals for men who are concerned about their violent behaviour, and for male victims of domestic and family violence.	Phone: 1800 000 599 Website: https://www.wa.gov.au/service/community-services/community-support/mens-domestic-violence-helpline

<p>Djinda Service</p> <p>Advocacy and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in Perth metropolitan area who have experienced family violence or sexual assault.</p>	<p>Phone: (08) 6164 0650</p> <p>Website: https://www.relationshipswa.org.au/djinda</p> <p>Mon-Fri, 9am - 4.30pm</p>
<p>Multicultural Women's Advocacy and Support Service</p> <p>Promotes safety of women from migrant, refugee or culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.</p>	<p>Phone: (08) 9328 1200</p> <p>Website: https://luma.org.au/services/family-and-domestic-violence/</p>
<p>QLife</p> <p>Support, information and referrals for LGBTIQ+ people and their loved ones wanting to talk about a range of issues including sexuality, gender, bodies, feelings and relationships</p>	<p>Phone: 1800 184 527</p> <p>Website: https://qlife.org.au/</p> <p>7 days a week, 3pm-Midnight</p>

7. How to Contact Us & Complaint Handling

For further information on how Perth Energy can provide assistance under the Family & Domestic Violence policy, please contact us:



This Policy is available at:

<https://www.perthenergy.com.au/regulatory-information>



Call us on 08 9420 0300 9am to 5pm AWST business days



Each bill we send you contains a section on Payment Assistance options.



If your first language is a language other than English, you can use the independent telephone interpreter service (TIS National) to arrange an interpreter.

The Perth Energy Family & Domestic Violence Policy will be translated into other languages to improve accessibility for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

Call 133 677 and ask to be connected to Perth Energy on 08 9420 0300



A TTY service is available for hearing impaired customers. To access this service, please call 133 677 and ask for 08 9420 0300.

Once in a while, things can go wrong but if this happens, we’re committed to making it right.

We offer a simple approach to addressing complaints about our products or services. Our customer service representatives will work with you to resolve any issues quickly, fairly and collaboratively. Your privacy is important to us, and all complaints are treated confidentially. Most complaints are resolved within a few days while more complex matters may take a little longer. We’ll keep you updated on the progress of your complaint.

If you experience a problem or want to provide some feedback, our Business Support team are your first point of contact and will investigate your concern then work with you to resolve it. We’ll share your feedback about our products and services with relevant areas to make improvements.

If you’re not satisfied with the resolution you’ve received, your matter can be reviewed by our Complaints specialists who’ll work closely with you to resolve your concerns.

Most matters can be resolved through our internal complaint process, and we ask that you give us the opportunity to explore all avenues in resolving your complaint. If you’re not satisfied with the handling of your complaint, you can contact the Energy & Water Ombudsman for free independent advice and information.

Energy and Water Ombudsman WA	1800 754 004	www.energyandwater.ombudsman.wa.gov.au
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Related Documents
Electricity Code of Conduct for Small Use Customers
Compendium of Gas Customer Licence Obligations