

Perth Energy

Family & Domestic Violence Policy



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 and does not tolerate family & domestic violence. When in this situation, your safety, wellbeing, and dignity are often, if not always, under threat or undermined by the use of violence. We understand that being safe is no single or simple decision or task and that no matter how much a person resists or responds to the violence, they may not be able to make it stop nor are they responsible for it.

Perth Energy is committed to supporting all customers who are experiencing or are impacted by family & 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 & domestic violence can happen to anyone, in any postcode, 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.

Women and children are more often the victims of family & domestic violence and those who use violence are overwhelmingly male. Family and domestic violence can be perpetrated by a partner, family member, carer, house mate, boyfriend, or girlfriend. Women also commit family and domestic violence against men, as do same-sex partners and those who identify in non-gender binary terms.

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

So, we can best support you, we invite you to communicate with us about your context. 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. You may want to nominate someone to contact us on your behalf. This may include:

- Financial counsellor;
- Social worker;
- Family member or friend;
- 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.

Visit <https://www.perthenergy.com.au/regulatory-information> to view or print our family & domestic violence policy.

2. What is Family & Domestic Violence?

Family & domestic violence takes different forms and may be known as different things such as, relationship violence or intimate partner violence.

Family & domestic violence is not limited to physical abuse, other forms of family & domestic violence can include but are not limited to:

- Economic abuse is a form of abuse when one partner has control over the other partner's access to economic resources, diminishing their capacity to support themselves so they become financially dependent on the perpetrator. For example: the perpetrator prevents a person from accessing funds, deciding when or how to access or use cash, being forced to put bills in your name, or putting bills under their name and then not taking financial responsibility for them.
- Emotional or Psychological abuse,
- Sexual abuse,
- 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.

3. Respectful Communication & Specialised Staff

You will always be treated with respect and dignity whenever you interact with us.

Our customer facing staff, have undergone specialised training to help understand and respond to family & domestic violence. This training covers issues related to family violence and its impacts, including:

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

We are equipped to support you by:

- Answering any questions you may have about Perth Energy's Family & 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 & 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 advise us that you are affected by family & domestic violence or we have reason to believe you are affected by family & domestic violence, we will advise you:

- That we must take reasonable steps to protect your information if you request, we do so (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 & domestic violence.

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.

Perth Energy regularly reviews and updates its Family & Domestic Violence policy and program training for its staff.

4. Account Security

We take our customer's 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 & 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 & domestic violence, we can assign a code word to your account to prevent unauthorised access by the perpetrator.

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 & domestic violence, there's different payment options available to you, including:

- Payment plans;
- Direct debit arrangements;
- BPAY;
- Online payments;
- Centrepay;
- 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 a period of 9 months from when we become aware or believe that you are experiencing family & domestic violence that your supply of electricity 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;
- electricity is being illegally used at the supply address; 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 & 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 & 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	000
Emergency Response (24 hours)	000
Lifeline: crisis support and suicide prevention services (24 hours)	13 11 14
National 1800 RESPECT Line: National counselling and support service for people impacted by family & domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse.	1800 737 732 https://www.1800respect.org.au/
Women's Family & domestic Violence Helpline: State-wide service providing support and counselling for women experiencing family and domestic violence.	Phone: 1800 015 188
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 a whole lot more.	https://askizzy.org.au/about If you're on the Telstra mobile network, you can access Ask Izzy even if you don't have credit.
Men's referral service: an anonymous and confidential telephone counselling, information and referrals service to help men involved in family & domestic violence matters	1300 766 491 www.mrs.org.au

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:



Visit <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



We have an interpreter service available for customers whose first language is a language other than English. Literature in relation to the Perth Energy Family & Domestic Violence Policy will be translated into other languages to improve accessibility for culturally and linguistically diverse communities.



A TTY service is available for hearing impaired customers. To access this service, please contact us on 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.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/energyandwater/
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