

# CONSUMER CARE POLICY

# THIS IS OUR CONSUMER CARE POLICY

This policy is our commitment to you. It tells you how we will communicate with you, work with you, and support you while you're our customer. Our Consumer Care Policy has been designed to meet the purposes outlined in the Electricity Authority Consumer Care Obligations and the Gas Industry Consumer Care Guidelines.

## **1. Electricity and gas are important:**

Electricity and gas are essential for wellbeing. They help us stay warm, cook food, and enjoy our devices. For some of us, electricity is also necessary for using critical medical equipment.

## **2. Respectful and helpful:**

We promise to work with you in a respectful and helpful way. We will always focus on solving problems together.

## **3. Clear communication:**

We will communicate with you in a way that is easy to understand. We will provide information in a timely manner.

## **4. Finding the right plan:**

We will help you find the best pricing plan, so that you're on the right plan for your needs.

## **5. Your electricity use:**

You can ask us for information about how much electricity you use. This will help you make the right choices about your plan and your electricity use.

## **6. Helping with payments:**

If you have trouble paying, we'll work with you to find a solution that works for you.

## **7. Last resort disconnection:**

If you're having trouble paying your account, we will work alongside you and keep your electricity connected. Disconnection is a very last resort, and we will try everything else first.

## **8. Fees and discounts:**

We will be clear and open about the fees we charge.

## **9. Learning and improving:**

We will learn from any problems that come up and use them to make our service better for everyone.

## Here is how we support our customers at Mercury

### Signing up with Mercury

Before you become a Mercury customer, we will ask you questions about yourself and your situation. We'll make sure your personal information is kept safe, and we'll only use it for its intended purpose.

We'll make sure you're given clear advice about the pricing plans and products we offer, and we'll share our terms and conditions with you at the start of your journey with us.

As part of your sign up, we will run a credit check using the information you give us. If this isn't successful, we'll explain why, and we'll give you information to help connect you with support agencies who can offer assistance.

While you are our customer, we'll work with you in the way that is best for you. You can nominate a support person to help you communicate with us, or an alternate contact person for us to contact if we can't reach you. If your alternate contact person wants to opt out of this, we'll let you know.

[mercury.co.nz/terms](https://mercury.co.nz/terms)

### How to make payments

There are lots of ways you can pay your Mercury bill. You can pay by direct debit, debit or credit card, online banking, automatic payment, or phone banking. Some NZ Post stores accept bill payments. You can also pay via our Mercury app.

Mercury also offers SmoothPay, which is a weekly or fortnightly direct debit from your bank account. We review the amount regularly, to make sure you're paying the right amount.

[mercury.co.nz/ways-to-pay](https://mercury.co.nz/ways-to-pay)

### Payment difficulties and support

We know things don't always go to plan. Incomes and circumstances can change, and we're here to support you with your Mercury account through those changes. If you find that making payments or keeping to a payment arrangement isn't working, please reach out.

Understanding your circumstances will help us to help you. Please talk to us as soon as you can.

We'll listen carefully, and we'll work with you to find a payment plan that works for you. We'll also make sure you're on the right electricity plan for your household's needs. While you're working with us, we'll make sure your services aren't disconnected, and we won't refer your debt to a collection agency.

We can refer you to one of our trusted partners – in the community, or in government – for help with things like support with paying your bill. Once a referral is made, we'll give you time to work with the support organisation we refer you to. We'll also work alongside the support organisation to help you however we can.

We want to help keep your home healthy and warm. We can offer you advice on how to use your electricity and gas in a way that could help you save money. If you're not using gas or electricity so that you can pay your bills, please contact us for help. An example of this might be not using your heaters enough during cold weather. If you're already using your gas and electricity in the most efficient way, we can refer you to someone in your community who can provide electricity or gas efficiency and healthy homes advice.

[mercury.co.nz/payment-support](https://mercury.co.nz/payment-support)

### Medically dependent consumers

A medically dependent consumer is someone who lives at your property, either temporarily or permanently, who needs electricity or gas for critical medical reasons. This means that without electricity or gas, that person is at risk of serious harm or loss of life.

When you first join Mercury, we'll ask you if someone at your property is medically dependent. We'll also check in once a year to see if things have changed and remind you to contact us if a medically dependent person moves in or leaves your property.

If you think this applies to you, or someone in your household, please let us know as soon as possible by calling us on 0800 10 18 10. We'll send you a confirmation form to take to your GP or health practitioner; you'll need to return it to us within 60 business days. If we don't receive the form and we can't contact you, we may decline your application to be considered medically dependent.

Mercury doesn't disconnect medically dependent customers, but there are things that are outside of our control. An extreme weather event, an

unplanned outage, or an accident could cause an electricity or gas outage. You should have a plan that you can follow if the electricity or gas goes out – an emergency response plan. This might include always having a fully charged mobile phone battery, planning to go to a relative or friend's house, or calling for an ambulance to take you to hospital if needed. The Electricity Authority have more information on how to create a plan on their website, and there is also some advice on the confirmation form we'll send you.

[ea.govt.nz/your-power/medically-dependent-consumers/](https://ea.govt.nz/your-power/medically-dependent-consumers/)

[mercury.co.nz/consumer-care](https://mercury.co.nz/consumer-care)

## Disconnection and reconnection

We do not disconnect customers who we are working alongside, who need a helping hand. Instead, we work with our trusted community and government partners to make sure our customers get the support they need to get back on track.

We may disconnect electricity or gas at a property if a customer doesn't register to pay for the supply of services. Before we disconnect, we'll send contact information and disconnection warnings to the property.

We may also disconnect if we find there is fraudulent activity or a breach of our terms and conditions, or if there is danger at a property that relates to an electricity or gas connection. Our terms and conditions cover the different reasons we may disconnect your services.

If we disconnect your electricity or gas supply for non-payment, we will give you at least 7 business days' notice, as well as a final warning no less than 24 hours and no more than 7 days before disconnection. We only disconnect electricity or gas supplies on business days.

If your electricity or gas supply is disconnected and you would like to have it reconnected, you'll need to contact us.

## Faults

From time to time, your electricity or gas distributor might need to turn off the connection to your home to do maintenance or upgrades. We'll notify you of this in writing before it happens, so you can make plans.

Sometimes things go wrong, and there will be an interruption to your electricity, gas, or telecommunications connection. This could be caused by an accident or a weather event. If you find that your services aren't working, please call us straight away. If there is a fault, we will work out who is best to fix it.

## Fees

Sometimes a fee will need to be charged for services outside of your day-to-day electricity and gas prices. If you are going to be charged a fee, we'll tell you about it first. We'll also tell you what it is and explain what it's for, and we will let you know if there is anything you can do to avoid being charged the fee. We have a list of fees on our website, and if you need a printed copy, we'll send one to you.

Mercury doesn't charge bonds to residential customers.

[mercury.co.nz/fees](https://mercury.co.nz/fees)

## Complaints and feedback

Getting it right matters to Mercury. If you have a complaint about the service you've received, or you want to share feedback about an experience you've had, we want to hear from you as soon as possible.

Please call us on **0800 10 18 10**, email us at [enquiries@mercury.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@mercury.co.nz), or if you'd prefer to write to us, please post a letter to: **Mercury, Private Bag 12023, Tauranga 3143**.

Your feedback matters. We will take every opportunity to reflect on the feedback you give us and improve wherever we can.

[mercury.co.nz/complaints](https://mercury.co.nz/complaints)

If you feel that Mercury hasn't resolved your electricity or gas complaint, you can contact Utilities Disputes. Utilities Disputes is an independent organisation that specialises in resolving complaints in a fair way, at no cost to the customer. You can call Utilities disputes on **0800 22 33 40**, email them at [info@udl.co.nz](mailto:info@udl.co.nz), and find more information on their website [udl.co.nz](https://udl.co.nz).

If your complaint is about your internet or mobile phone, you can contact Telecommunications Dispute Resolution (TDR). TDR is a free and independent service that specialises in resolving telecommunication complaints in a fair way. You can call TDR on **0508 98 98 98**, and find more information on their website [tdr.org.nz](https://tdr.org.nz).