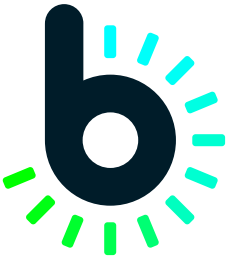




Code of practice on billing and disconnection





bright

Code of practice on billing and disconnection

At bright we want you to be in control of your energy, that's why we will present information to you on how much energy you are using and the charges for that energy in a manner that is clear and easy to understand. We have set out in this document information on our billing processes, communication of bills, payment methods, deposits and refunds. We have also set out our policy on disconnection of customers for non-payment. This document relates to our household and business customers.

Understanding your bright bill

Your bill will clearly show:

- ✦ The period the bill/statement relates to, date of issue and date payment is due;
- ✦ Your tariff name and category, and the prices for your tariff;
- ✦ Your meter readings based on an actual read from ESB Networks, a customer read or an estimate either generated by ESB Networks or bright where an actual read is not available;
- ✦ The total cost of electricity for the period;
- ✦ Any additional charges such as standing charges, VAT and levies;
- ✦ Any balances from your previous bill and whether these are debit or credit.

How you receive your bill

Our terms and conditions state that we will provide your bills to you in electronic format, either by email, through our app or in the "your account" section of our website. If you prefer to receive your bill in a paper format you can easily change your preferences on the app or website or contact our energy specialists on 01 588 1777. There will be no additional charge for paper billing.

Paying your bill

You can choose to pay your bill via one of the below options:

- ✦ **Monthly direct debit** – we will agree a monthly amount with you, based on actual or forecasted annual usage and collect that amount from you each month. We will review this amount regularly against your usage to ensure you are not over or under paying;
- ✦ **Direct debit in arrears** – every month we'll send you a bill for your usage that month, we'll collect the amount shown on the bill within 14 days using bank details you have provided to us;
- ✦ **Payment by Card** – You can make a payment at any time with a debit or credit card through the app or 'your account' section of the website or by contacting our energy specialists on 01 588 1777.

If you want to set up a budget plan for your electricity, regular direct debits allow the option of spreading the cost of your electricity over a defined period.

If you are paying for a dual fuel bill and do not cover the entire amount of the bill, we will apply the payment to the fuel which has the longest outstanding debt. Where there is no outstanding debt, we will split the payment on the basis of the value of each fuel. So, for example if you owe €60 for electricity and €40 for gas and make a payment of €50 we would allocate this as 60% to electricity (€30) and 40% to gas (€20). The remainder of the balance will still be outstanding.

Security deposits

In certain cases, we may decide it is appropriate to request a security deposit. Any deposit required will be based on an estimated three month usage. Deposit amounts for commercial customers will vary depending on the type of business.

Where we take a deposit, we will return this in the next billing period following the 12 months where you have met credit terms for a continual 12 month period. If you are struggling to meet credit terms, we will provide assistance on steps you can take to improve your credit worthiness and let you know what you must do for the security deposit to no longer be required. If you close your account, the deposit will be returned following deduction of any outstanding payments. Our policy on security deposits can be found on our website www.brightenergy.com. To request a copy of this policy in an accessible format contact us on 01 588 1777.

If you are having difficulty paying your bill

At bright we have developed procedures to make sure we identify those instances where customers miss a payment on their electricity account. We know that sometimes it's just an oversight, but we'll get in touch to make sure you realise that payment is due.

We recognise that sometimes circumstances happen which make it difficult for people to pay their bills. If you are having difficulty paying your bill, then get in touch with our energy specialists on 01 588 1777. The sooner you contact us the sooner we can help, our energy specialists are trained to help and advise. We will work with you to find a solution that suits your needs, we will always treat you with respect and listen sympathetically to your case. We would only seek to disconnect a customer's electricity supply for non-payment as a last resort.

Payment plans

Where you are struggling to pay bills, we can arrange a payment plan. If you are having difficulty paying a bill contact us and we will work with you to find a solution. We can arrange payment plans with you to suit your circumstances and monitor those plans to make sure you are meeting them. We will work with you and with people or organisations working on your behalf to ensure that the payment arrangements are right for you and take into account your ability to pay. Details of organisations that can help are set out below.

When we enter into a payment plan with you, we will send you the details of that plan within one week of the plan being agreed.

Where you, as a household customer, are struggling to pay your bills we can install a prepayment meter or budget controller at your property, where it is practical and feasible to do so.

Further advice

If you are struggling to pay your energy bills or have problem debt in any area, you can get help and advice free of charge from your local Money Advice and Budget Service (MABS). You can find details of your local office, make an appointment or get advice on their website www.mabs.ie or call the MABS helpline on 0761 072 000. Other agencies can also provide assistance and advice such as, Citizens Information – Irish eGovernment website developed by the Citizens Information Board – www.citizensinformation.ie

We will work with you and with people or organisations working on your behalf to ensure that the payment arrangements are right for you.

Disconnecting your property

Disconnection for non-payment of bills is a last resort and we will follow our escalation process before we disconnect any property. This process involves:

- ✦ Contacting you at least four times to inform you that you are in arrears, (two of these notices will be in writing, other forms of contact may include by phone, or by text or email), each attempt will be no less than three working days apart. This contact will be in addition to the formal notice of disconnection and in addition to any communications contained in your normal bill;
- ✦ Providing you with information on any options you have to make payment and providing contact details if you wish to enter into a payment plan;
- ✦ Offering the installation of a prepayment meter for repayment of debt where suitable, or a budget controller.

Where we proceed to disconnect your supply, we will issue a notice that will:

- ✦ Give ten working days' notice of our intention to disconnect (where the customer is a business or large user and has gone into liquidation we may reduce the notice period to two working days, to mitigate the chance of default);
- ✦ Specify the reason for the disconnection;
- ✦ Detail the costs that will apply for disconnection and reconnection;
- ✦ Inform you that you cannot pay the person carrying out the disconnection;
- ✦ Include details so that you can contact us to discuss payment arrangements and avoid disconnection.

We promise that:

Disconnections will not be made on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, eve of a Public Holiday or a Public Holiday, other than for safety reasons.

We may disconnect your property in the following circumstances:

- ✦ You fail to pay a bill relating to the supply of electricity;
- ✦ You do not agree to a payment plan, or you break the terms of your payment plan;
- ✦ You request to be disconnected and we determine that you are the account holder;
- ✦ You do not respond to our notice of disconnection.

If there is no registered account holder at the premises – so the previous account holder has closed their account but we are still supplying the property, we will issue a letter informing the occupant that the premises will be disconnected due to no new account holder being registered.

In the event of an emergency or where there is a safety issue ESB Networks may disconnect your property without notification and this code will not apply.

We will not disconnect your property if:

- ✦ You agree to and follow a payment plan with us;
- ✦ You have agreed the installation of a prepayment meter through which debt will be repaid;
- ✦ You have made a complaint, through our complaint process, in relation to the reason for disconnection, and that complaint has not yet been resolved;
- ✦ The bill due is not for the supply of electricity;
- ✦ Failure to pay a bill based on a regular estimate unless it is fair and reasonable in the circumstances (e.g. unable to gain access for a meter reading);
- ✦ Where you are disputing a bill, this clause only applies to the disputed bill and not any previous or subsequent bills;
- ✦ Where a customer is a member of any group of customers that the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) may specify from time to time.

We promise that:

We will not disconnect any customers on our Priority Services Register who rely on electrical equipment for life support. We will also not disconnect customers on our Special Services Register over the winter months. Please see our code of practice on vulnerable customers to see if you are eligible to sign up to these services.

Reconnecting your property

If your property is disconnected, we can arrange to have you reconnected under our Standard Terms and Conditions of supply when:

- ✦ You pay the full amount you owe, including a fee for reconnecting your supply;
- ✦ You agree to a suitable payment plan;
- ✦ You agree to pay a security deposit, to guard against any payment default in the future. The conditions for any security deposit will be in writing and in line with our security deposit policy.

We will ensure that you are reconnected in line with the Network Operators Reconnection Schedule. We can refuse to restore a supply where there has been criminal damage, such as meter interference.

Closing your account

Where you wish to close your account, it is your responsibility to:

1. Inform us;
2. Provide a meter reading (where it is not possible to obtain a meter reading an estimate will be used);
3. Where relevant provide forwarding contact information.

If you do not provide this information you may be held responsible for any electricity used up to the date that a new customer registers at that property or the property is de-energised.

If you are switching supplier you do not need to contact us, your new supplier will inform us, and your account will close when the new supplier starts to supply you.

If you move into a new property and bright are the electricity supplier, you must inform us straight away and set up an account with us to pay for the electricity you use. If you use electricity without contacting us, then a deemed contract will apply under Section 16A of the Energy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1995 and you will still be liable for the electricity you use.

Final bill

Once you close your account, we will issue you with a final bill within six weeks. You must pay the outstanding balance on the final bill in full. If you have a credit balance, we will notify that you are due a refund. We will normally credit it directly into your bank within two months of the final bill being issued. If you would prefer to be refunded by an alternative repayment method please contact us on 01 588 1777.

You can request a copy of this code, or any of our codes free of charge, or in an accessible format.

Need help? Get in touch!



Call us
01 588 1777



Email
hello@brightenergy.com



Web Chat
www.brightenergy.com



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