AusNet

Electricity Distribution Network

Customer Charter

AusNet

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Connecting communities to electricity

Contact us

Customer Enquiries: 1300 360 795
(8am–5pm Monday to Friday)

24/7 Faults & Emergencies: 13 17 99

Email:
customersupport@ausnetservices.com.au

Website: www.ausnetservices.com.au

Mail: Customer Service Centre,
Locked Bag 13051, Melbourne VIC 8001

If you need an interpreter, please call 13 14 50.

简体中文 (हिन्दी) Ελληνικά Italiano
Việt ngữ العربية ਪੰਜਾਬੀ 繁體中文

Publication date October 2022.

Welcome to AusNet

We're an electricity distribution company, which means we move electricity from where it's made, to your home, business and community.

You can choose your electricity retailer, but your distributor is determined by your location. While you don't pay your power bill directly to us, a percentage of your bill is made up of charges for the cost of getting electricity to you. You're our customer and customers are at the centre of everything we do.

This Customer Charter outlines our commitment to you and your legal rights.

Our network

We deliver electricity to more than 768,460 Victorians.

Our purpose

To connect communities with energy and accelerate a sustainable future.

Keeping the lights on

We do this by maintaining the poles, wires and underground cables. We're available every day of the year to respond to faults and emergencies on the network. We're also investing in new projects and technology to keep the network safe and reliable.

And we are supporting the future of the energy industry with key infrastructure to connect to renewables.

Our Customer Charter

This charter outlines important things that we all need to do to keep the flow of electricity safe and reliable for everyone.

Here you'll find information on your legal rights, obligations and how to give us feedback, as well as our rights and obligations as your distributor.

Our purpose is to connect communities with energy and accelerate a sustainable future.

Our customers

We are passionate about our customers. We prioritise customers who rely on electricity for life saving equipment in their homes and customers in vulnerable circumstances.

We regularly survey customers to seek feedback so we can do things better. We also consult customers and community on business and policy issues through engagement activities and our Customer Consultative Committee.

We welcome your feedback at any time via our website, email or by phone.

How to contact us

Website: www.ausnetservices.com.au/contact

Customer Enquiries: 1300 360 795
(8am–5pm, Monday to Friday)

24/7 Faults & Emergencies: 13 17 99

Email: customersupport@ausnetservices.com.au

Postal address: Locked Bag 14051, Melbourne VIC 8001

Life support customers: 1800 818 832

If you need an interpreter, please call 13 14 50

We welcome calls through the National Relay Service (NRS) if you are deaf, have a hearing impairment and/or speech impairment. Choose your preferred access option and provide our phone number 1300 360 795 when asked by the relay officer.

Keep up to date via SMS

To get SMS updates from us about power outages and restoration times:

- ensure your electricity retailer, that's the company you pay your electricity bills to, has your mobile number. They'll pass the number onto us
- or you can contact us directly on 1300 360 795. You can also ask us for a copy of your request for digital communications.

Keeping safe during emergencies

Safety is our number one priority. During emergencies or extreme weather events, including storms and bushfires, your electricity supply may be interrupted.

It's important to keep safe and know what to do when the power goes out.

Keep your fridge closed, turn off appliances and listen to your local emergency radio stations for updates.

Storms and heatwaves can cause widespread electricity interruptions and affect how quickly we can restore your power supply.

If you live in areas that are regularly impacted by storms or bushfires, make a plan that captures what to do if you and your family are without electricity.

If you lose power during or after an extreme weather event, call our Faults & Emergencies hotline 13 17 99 (24 hours).

If you see hazards, including fallen powerlines or tree branches on powerlines, keep a safe distance, assume the powerlines are live and report the hazard on 13 17 99.

Interpreter services

We speak your language. If you need an interpreter, please call 13 14 50.

Stay up to date on social

Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

@AusNet.Services.Energy
@AusNetServices
@AusNetServices

Our service level commitments

Guaranteed Service Levels

We do our best to provide you with reliable and safe electricity supply, however we cannot guarantee an uninterrupted supply as our network is exposed to events such as severe weather.

The Electricity Distribution Code of Practice specifies minimum guaranteed service levels we must provide you as your electricity distributor. Payment amounts are set in the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice.

Some things to note about these payments:

- You may not be entitled to a payment if an outage is the result of an event which the Essential Services Commission (ESC) has determined is beyond our control in accordance with relevant industry codes.
- You may be entitled to multiple payments, but only one in each category.
- Payments are usually applied automatically as a credit to your power bill.

The table to the right summarises the Guaranteed Service Level (GSL) categories and payments effective from 1 July 2021. Supply restoration, supply reliability and momentary outage GSL payments are calculated on an annual basis, however payments are made on a quarterly basis. Major event day, late or missed appointments and delay to new connections will be made within three months of the event.

Street lighting repairs

You may be eligible to receive $25 if you tell us about a faulty streetlight and we don't repair it within two business days. You must be the first person to report it and the streetlight must be:

- the closest streetlight to your home or business
- located within our network.

The public lighting GSL schedule can be found in the ESC's Public Lighting Code. If you have a question about GSLs or believe you are eligible for compensation, visit www.ausnetservices.com.au/GSLScheme.

Supply restoration payments

Hours of unplanned, sustained outages	Amount payable
More than 18 hours per year	$130
More than 30 hours per year	$190
More than 60 hours per year	$380

Major event day payments

Hours of unplanned, sustained outages	Amount payable
More than 12 hours on a major event day	$90

Supply reliability payments

Number of unplanned, sustained outages	Amount payable
More than 8 per year	$130
More than 12 per year	$190
More than 20 per year	$380

Momentary outages

Less than three minute each	Amount payable
More than 24 per year	$40
More than 36 per year	$50

Late or missed customer appointments

Reason for payment	Amount payable
More than 15 minutes late for an agreed appointment window	$35

Delay to new connections

Reason for payment	Payment range
Where a new electricity supply is not connected on the agreed date	$80 per day to maximum $400

Connecting communities

Connections and disconnections

Connections

We do our best to connect power to the supply address on a date agreed with the customer or the retailer. For connections to a new supply address, we complete the work within 10 business days after the request.

You'll need to comply with the technical requirements, provide acceptable identification and a Certificate of Electrical Safety (CES) for the new supply address.

We can connect electricity to your new supply address once a safe and adequate supply is available at your property boundary.

Disconnections

We prefer not to disconnect customers, but may have to when there's a breach of the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice, during an emergency, for safety reasons, or by request from you or your retailer.

If we can safely disconnect remotely through our smart meter communications network, we'll disconnect within two hours of a valid request from you or your retailer during business hours.

We will not disconnect if you have an outstanding complaint with the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria), or if you are a tenant and the property owner is not complying with the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice.

We won’t disconnect customers on:

- a weekday before 8am or after 2pm (for residential customers), or 3pm (for business customers)
- the weekend, a Friday, public holiday or day before a public holiday. We'll give you five days written notice of a disconnection so you can fix the fault. If the fault isn't fixed, you'll get a final disconnection notice five days later.

Reconnections

To reconnect electricity where there is an existing connection, please contact your retailer. Your retailer will arrange with us for the power to be turned on.

If your retailer sends us the request before 3pm, we'll reconnect your supply on the same business day, or the next business day if we get the request after 3pm. If we get the request between 3pm and 9pm, we can still reconnect your supply that day, but an after hours reconnection charge will apply.

Landlords and tenants

If you can't fix a breach of the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice because you're not the owner of the power supply address, you'll need to notify your landlord and they'll have to fulfil this obligation.

Life support customers

If you or someone at your premises requires approved life support equipment, you need to:

- tell us or your retailer as soon as possible and we will register you as having special supply needs
- work with your medical practitioner to create an emergency plan for power outages.

When you register with us as a life support customer, we'll send you a confirmation form for your medical practitioner to complete. You must send us the completed form within 50 business days. You can ask for an extension if needed.

If you don't return the form to us within 50 business days, we'll contact you and send you reminder notices before we remove you from our life support register.

When you're registered

We'll give you tips on how to prepare for power interruptions or outages. We can also send you SMS updates and alerts.

For planned power interruptions, we give you at least four business days' notice. If you have requested a longer notice period which is reasonably necessary, we'll provide more time.

If you change retailer, make sure you tell your new retailer you rely on life support equipment.

We won't disconnect supply to registered life support customers except in the case of an emergency.

For more information, including what equipment is defined as life support equipment, visit: www.ausnetservices.com.au/lifesupport

Planning for an outage

During any outage, planned or unplanned, we prioritise our life support customers.

Life support customers can call 1800 818 832 as soon as they receive a planned outage notification or experience an unplanned outage.

Register for life support, report outages and equipment issues

1800 818 832
(24 hours, 7 days a week)

Interpreter services

13 14 50

Life threatening emergency
000

Connecting communities

Safety and our shared obligation

Ensuring the network is safe and reliable is a shared responsibility, we all have a part to play.

Trees and vegetation

You need to keep trees and other vegetation on your property clear from any powerlines that run to or across your property. This includes any private power lines, whether they service your property or neighbouring properties.

We'll keep all the other powerlines clear of branches, trees and other vegetation. We have a specialist team to manage this and regularly inspect our lines.

Our employees and contractors will also comply with environmental obligations.

Together we can ensure a safe and reliable electricity supply.

Access to your property

Sometimes we need to access your property to:

- read and inspect the meter or install a new meter
- connect or disconnect the electricity supply
- inspect and/or test the electrical installation
- undertake repairs, maintenance and any other related services.

You need to let us know of any potential safety hazards, like a guard dog or uncovered hole, as soon as possible. You also need to minimise the hazard where you can.

Our employees, including authorised representatives, will always carry official identification, so you can confirm our identity when we arrive.

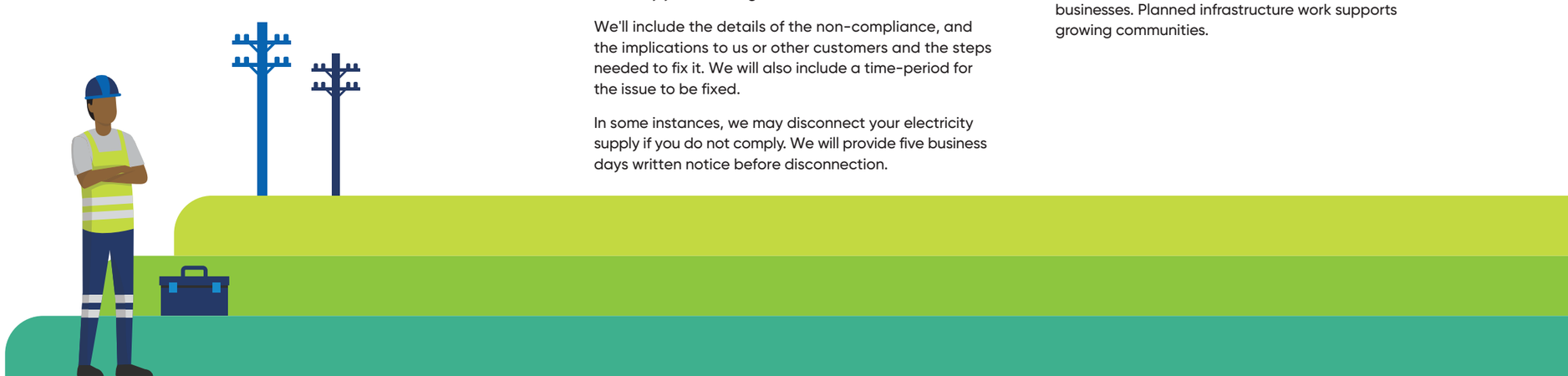
If you have any doubts or concerns about an AusNet employee or authorised representative, call us on 1300 360 795.

Keeping supply safe for everyone

We all have a part to play in ensuring safe and reliable electricity supply. To keep your home supply safe:

- only use Registered Electrical Contractors (REC) to work on your premises
- use electrical appliances or equipment that meet the Australian Electricity Supply standards
- provide reasonable protection for supply equipment, such as your electricity meter
- tell us of any additions or alterations to your electricity supply, including solar panel installations
- keep all vegetation, structures and vehicles clear of all electrical lines at your premises
- make sure your actions and equipment do not adversely affect our distribution network or the electricity supply to any other person.

For everyone's safety you can not interfere with our equipment installed at your premises. This means you're not allowed to supply another address, bypass the meter, use domestic supply for non-domestic purposes, or use specified tariffs for another purpose.



Other important things an electrician can help with

- You need to notify us if you need to use more than 40 amps for a single-phase connection. If you exceed 40 amps prior to notifying us, we may charge you according to our customer contribution policy (this may happen during renovations or a subdivision, your Registered Electrical Contract (REC) can clarify).
- Make sure your electrical installation complies with the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice and keep the wiring and equipment at your premises in a safe condition.
- Manage electricity consumption within your electrical installation to ensure compliance with the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice.

Safety non-compliance – what to expect

What happens when we have non-compliance with the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice?

When we're aware of a material failure of our obligations under the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice with potential adverse impacts, we will notify you and keep you informed of the steps we're taking to fix the issue.

What happens when you have non-compliance with the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice?

If we become aware of a failure to meet your obligations under the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice, we will notify you in writing.

We'll include the details of the non-compliance, and the implications to us or other customers and the steps needed to fix it. We will also include a time-period for the issue to be fixed.

In some instances, we may disconnect your electricity supply if you do not comply. We will provide five business days written notice before disconnection.

High voltage network customers

If you are a customer connected to our 22 kV high voltage (HV) network, you need to confirm if you are connected to a section of the network which is protected by Rapid Earth Fault Current Limiter (REFCL) protection systems.

What is REFCL protection?

We're investing in technology that cuts the supply of electricity to fallen powerlines within milliseconds.

REFCL is a leading-edge technology we're installing in high bushfire risk areas of our network to reduce the risk of powerline-related bushfires. REFCL protection works by reducing the flow of electricity through a line to prevent sparking when a power line hits the ground. REFCL protection is like a giant safety switch on our network.

What impact does this have to my HV electrical assets?

You need to take reasonable precautions to minimise the risk of loss or damage that may result from a REFCL protection operations.

Find out more about REFCLs, including which parts of our network are REFCL protected:
www.ausnetservices.com.au/REFCL

Outages and interruptions - planned and unplanned

While we want the electricity to always be on, sometimes there are unplanned outages due to a fault or an emergency. We may also need to turn the power off for planned works.

Planned maintenance on our network is essential for the safe and reliable delivery of power to homes and businesses. Planned infrastructure work supports growing communities.

Outages and interruptions

What happens during a planned outages?

A planned outage happens when we're upgrading or maintaining network infrastructure (the poles and wires) that supply energy to you. Planned outages are a critical part of delivering safe and reliable electricity to you.

The Essential Services Commission sets out our and your responsibilities during a planned outage.

Prior to a planned outage we must:

- give you at least four business days' notice of the planned outage
- use your preferred communication channel (SMS, email or letter).

We may also be required to interrupt supply for emergency reasons or to maintain the stability of the grid.

What happens during unplanned outages?

Unplanned outages can be caused by things like extreme weather, bushfires, car accidents or even wildlife. During an unplanned outage, we do our best to restore supply as quickly and safely as we can.

During an unplanned outage we will:

- post updates on our website, Outage Tracker and social media pages
- provide our best estimate of restoration times.

During an unplanned outage you can:

- call us on 13 17 99 for information or to report fallen power poles or wires
- get ready to activate your emergency plan if you're a life support customer.

Find out how you can be power prepared: **www.ausnetservices.com.au/powerprepared**

Momentary interruptions

Momentary interruptions happen when our safety devices are activated by a temporary interference on our powerlines. They usually last up to 10 seconds, and can be caused by things like an animal or tree debris.

The safety device 'auto-closes' the power line so it can clear. Supply is restored automatically.

Voltage variations

The voltage level at which we must supply your electricity is prescribed by the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice and overseen by the Essential Services Commission. Sometimes, a variation in the supply voltage can occur. If you suffer damage to your property as a result of a voltage variation outside the prescribed limits and you use less than 160 megawatt hours of electricity per year, you may be eligible for compensation. Business customers need to take reasonable precautions to minimise any loss or damage caused by voltage variations.

Major interruptions

When major interruptions occur, we often get a large number of calls at the same time. Our Outage Tracker website (**www.outagetracker.com.au**) will provide you with information about known electricity supply problems affecting your address and an approximate time when we expect the supply to be restored. During major emergencies or widespread interruptions, public information about your power supply will be broadcast via ABC Local Radio.

Accelerating our sustainable future

A sustainable energy future is as important to us as it is to you. If you plan on installing embedded generation and storage, there a few things you need to consider.

Before installing rooftop solar, electric vehicle charging station or a battery at your premises, you need to get in touch with us. You need to ensure the unit and any equipment that's connected to the network:

- complies with the Electricity Distribution Code of Practice
- complies with the Electricity Safety Act 1998 and associated Safety Regulations
- complies with all relevant Australian Standards
- is maintained in a safe condition
- is effectively coordinated with the electrical characteristics of the network, including protection equipment.

We'll work with you to establish a connection agreement, and then you can connect to the electricity network. Details of our connection process can be found here: **ausnetservices.com.au/connection-types**

We may disconnect, or ask you to disconnect, your embedded generation unit from the network if it breaches these regulatory obligations.

Connecting communities

Our commitments to you

We have six commitments designed to make sure we understand your needs. Our commitments shape our services to make it simple and easy to get things done and to improve the experience of our customers and communities.

Commitment 1

Building our understanding of customers' needs and expectations.

Commitment 2

Establishing clearer accountability for customers.

Commitment 3

Aligning our incentives with customer outcomes.

Commitment 4

Fixing customer pain points and improving the customer experience.

Commitment 5

Collaborating with the community and taking care of customers in vulnerable circumstances.

Commitment 6

Making our organisation easier to deal with.

We would love to hear from you

To share feedback on your experience or make a suggestion for the future, let us know.

Email: research@ausnetservices.com.au

Protecting your personal information

Privacy and confidentiality

We respect your privacy. We may receive information about you from you or your electricity retailer. We will only handle, use or disclose your personal information in accordance with applicable privacy laws.

Our Privacy Policy explains how we deal with your personal information. You can find our privacy policy at: **www.ausnetservices.com.au/privacy**

From time to time, we may contact you to get feedback about our services. The information we collect through this process will only be used to help improve our customer service.

We would love to hear from you

If you provide us with your explicit informed consent in relation to planned outages or life support equipment deregistration, we will retain a record of your explicit informed consent for at least two years. We must, on your request and at no charge, give you a copy of your explicit informed consent.

Access to information about your electricity supply

So that you can easily access information about your electricity supply, we provide the following information on our website, and in hard copy free of charge at your request:

- Our performance targets for supply reliability.
- Our Network Tariffs and Standard Service Prices.
- Voltage variation guidelines.
- Transmission Planning Reports.
- Distribution Planning Reports.
- Information concerning the connection of your electrical installation.
- How to use your electricity so that it does not interfere with our system or other customers.
- Small embedded generators.
- How to file a claim.

You can contact us for certain information about your energy supply and access your usage data via our My Home Energy Portal**:** **www.myhomeenergy.com.au**

When things don't go to plan

Complaints and disputes

We are committed to giving you the best experience, but we don't always get it right.

If you have a complaint, you can contact us by:

- **Customer Enquiries:** 1300 360 795 (8am-5pm, Monday to Friday)
- **Email:** customersupport@ausnetservices.com.au
- **Post:** Locked Bag 14051, Melbourne VIC 8001
- **Website:** www.ausnetservices.com.au/contact

We'll let you know within two business days that we've received your complaint, and aim to resolve it within 10 business days.

When contacting us please include your first and last name, phone number, National Meter Identifier (NMI) Number (found on your retailer bill) and information about the complaint or dispute.

How we manage complaints

Every customer has the right to make a complaint if they are not satisfied with our services. We will not discriminate against anyone as a result of making a complaint nor will we disconnect supply while a complaint or dispute is in progress.

We manage complaints in line with the International Standard ISO 10002 and our Complaints and Dispute Resolution Policy.

If you are not satisfied with the management of your complaint, you can request a review by a senior manager. You can also contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria (EWOV) at any stage on **1800 500 509** or **ewovinfo@ewov.com.au**

We would love to hear from you

Our focus continues to be making it easier for our customers to engage with us. If you have feedback on your experience or a suggestion for the future, we would love to hear from you.

Email: research@ausnetservices.com.au

Mail: Customer Research Manager,
Locked Bag 14051, Melbourne City Mail Centre 8001

www.ausnetservices.com.au

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Follow us on

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