



REFUNDS AND LOST PAYMENTS

Information for Victorian energy and water customers

This fact sheet explains the rules about energy and water refunds and outlines some of the problems that can be experienced with payments towards electricity, gas or water accounts.

What can go wrong

Sometimes payments are 'lost' in the system and not credited to customer accounts. Some reasons for this might include:

- When payments are made online or at an agency, there may be problems with the transfer of the payment from the bank or other agency to the electricity, gas or water company.
- The company may have problems with its billing system.
- There may have been some change to the customer's account, such as the payment details or account number.

Sometimes a company owes a customer money. Some reasons for this might include:

- The customer may have been overcharged on a previous bill.
- Reconciliation of a bill-smoothing payment plan may result in the customer being owed a refund.
- A security deposit the customer paid some time ago may be due to be returned. However, for Market Retail Contracts, your contract will outline how your company returns a security deposit.

Rules about refunds

Energy

If your energy company becomes aware that it has overcharged you by \$50 or less, it must refund the overcharge on your next bill. If you are no longer its customer, it must provide the refund within 10 business days.



If it's more than \$50, the company must tell you within 10 business days of becoming aware of it. It must refund the amount on your next bill, or pay it as you direct it to within 10 business days (as long as that request is reasonable).

For Standing Offer customers, and if you're a residential customer and have completed one year's payment on time (two years for business customers), any security deposit you paid must be repaid to you, with interest, within 10 business days. For Market Retail Contract customers, your contract will outline how your company refunds the security deposit.

Some of these rules are set out in the *Energy Retail Code* – available on the Essential Services Commission's website (esc.vic.gov.au) under Energy >> Compliance >> View all Publications.

Note: The *Energy Retail Code* only applies to customers who use less than 40MWh of electricity or 1,000GJ of gas per year.

Water

Your water corporation must also tell you within 10 business days of becoming aware of an overcharge—and, at your choice, refund or credit it to your account. If you are a domestic customer, your water corporation can't require you to provide a refundable advance (security deposit).

The rules are set out in the *Urban Water Customer Service Code* and in the *Rural Water Customer Service Code* – available on the Essential Services Commission's website (esc.vic.gov.au) under Water >> Codes & Guidelines >> View all Publications.

