



Family Violence Policy



RETAIL

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Purpose

This Family Violence Policy outlines the commitment from Ergon Energy Queensland Pty Ltd (Ergon Energy Retail) to *support customers* affected by family violence in a respectful and flexible manner.



Introduction

We acknowledge that Family Violence can and does impact our customers. This policy applies to all small customers, including former customers, who have been, or are still, being affected by family violence.

Family Violence can take many forms including:

- Social Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Psychological/Emotional Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Stalking
- Verbal Abuse
- Technology facilitated abuse
- Coercive control.

This policy explains:

- How we can assist you
- How we will identify if you are an affected customer and what we will do to prevent you having to repeatedly disclose this to us
- How we will consider your safety
- What we can do to assist with your electricity bill
- How we will protect your personal information
- How we will communicate with you and
- Outline the additional support you can access in Queensland

Definition of Family Violence

Family violence has the meaning given to the term “domestic abuse” in section 8 (8) of the Intervention Orders (Prevention of Abuse) Act 2009 SA.

How we can *assist* you

Ergon Retail only operates in regional Queensland. We understand the geography, diversity and the needs of our regional Queensland customers.

Our staff receive specialist training to ensure they understand the nature and consequences of *Family Violence*. This training includes the ability to identify and engage appropriately with an affected customer. We will never ask you to provide documentary evidence that you have been impacted by family violence. Just letting us know is all we need, and this allows us to work with you and tailor our response to your needs.



Once we identify you as an affected customer we will offer flexible support depending on your circumstances.

This may include:

- Referral to our hardship program if you are experiencing payment difficulties
- Adding a password and other system protections to your account
- Referral to a specialist family violence support service
- Only communicating with you via your preferred method

Identifying affected customers

Our staff are trained to identify indicators of people experiencing family violence and we will ensure we engage respectfully and with empathy to provide the support you need with your electricity bill.

Once you disclose to us that you are impacted by family violence, we have systems in place that will ensure you do not need to repeat this information to us again in the future.

How we will consider your safety

We understand a one size fits all approach does not work. Our trained staff will consult with you to understand your safety needs whilst considering your unique circumstances and will work with you to ensure your safety is always considered.



What can we do to assist with your *electricity bill?*

We recognise family violence as a potential cause of payment difficulty. We will work with you to determine a suitable solution tailored to your needs.

In working with you we will take into consideration:

- (a) The potential impact of debt recovery action; and
- (b) Whether other persons are also responsible for the electricity usage that resulted in the accumulation of arrears.

This may include:

- Management of your account by our specialist hardship team
- Offering you flexible payment plan options
- Preventing de-energisation or the referral to a debt collection agency for non-payment of account. We will never charge you a late payment fee.
- Potential deferral of debt or other measures deemed appropriate to your individual circumstances.

We can also work jointly with your appointed authorised representatives to assist with communication and management of your financial situation in relation to either your current or previous electricity accounts.

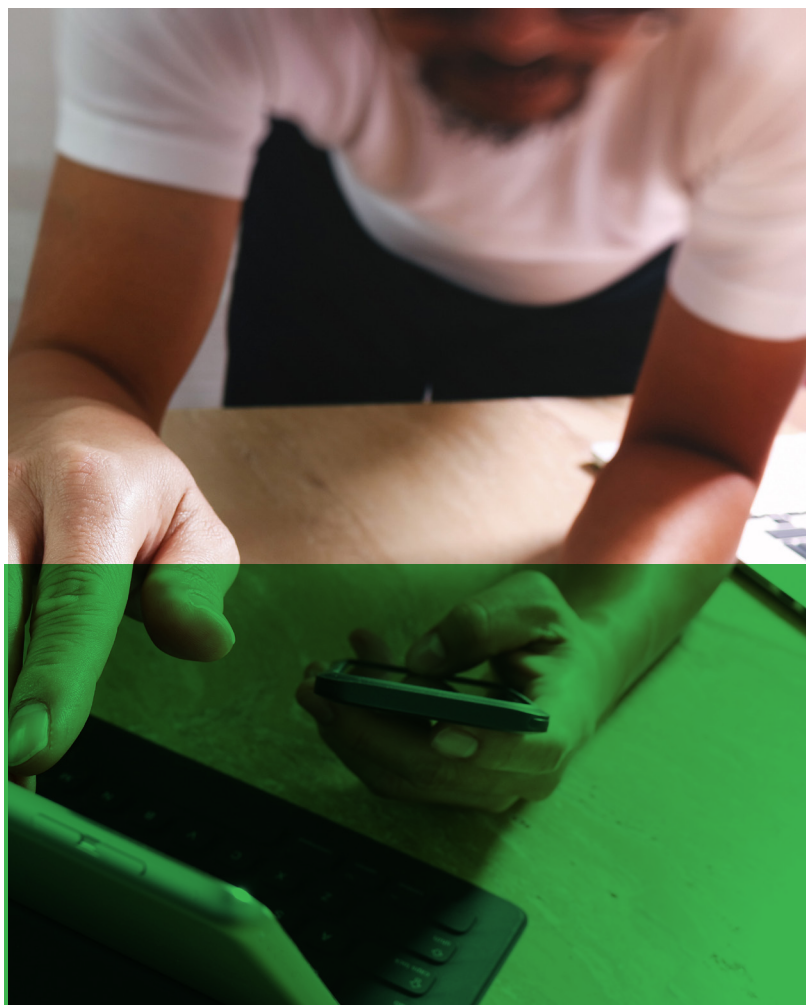


How we will protect your personal information

We will not disclose or provide access to information about you to any other person without your consent unless required by law or it is a lawful requirement. This includes not providing any information that may be used to identify, communicate with or locate you, such as information about your whereabouts, contact details, financial or personal circumstances. This also includes not providing access to confidential information to a person who is, or has been, a joint account holder with you.

How we will *communicate* with you

We will work with you to agree your preferred communication method and will offer alternative options of communication if your preferred method is not practicable. We would strongly encourage you to provide a password for your Ergon Energy Retail profile as an additional protection for your information.



Additional Support within Queensland

While we are here to help, you can also access specialist support services available in regional Queensland.

If you are in immediate danger, then call 000.

Otherwise the following support services provide support in regional Queensland.

Service	What they do	Phone or Website
1800 RESPECT	A 24-hour national counselling line for those who have experienced (or are at risk of) sexual assault, family and domestic violence.	1800 737 732
Lifeline Australia	Crisis Support. Suicide Prevention. Information and support services.	13 11 14
Refugee and Immigration Legal Service	Free legal assistance in immigration and refugee matters for people in need.	rails.org.au
QLD Government	Information, services and support for people impacted by domestic and family violence.	qld.gov.au/community
Central Queensland Indigenous Development (CQID) Family Violence Support	Providing support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who live across Central Queensland and surrounds.	cqid.com.au/services/family-violence-support/
Escaping Violence Payment from Uniting Care	This payment is available to anyone experiencing violence from their partner. Up to \$1500 in financial assistance such as vouchers for essential items, goods and services, such as removalists, bonds or basics for new home.	unitingcareqld.com.au
DV Connect	Providing support for men and women	dvconnect.org 1800 811 811

Governance

We will review this policy at least once every two years.

Complaints and Compliance Management

We manage complaints in accordance with *AS/NZS 10002:2014 – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations*, and we aim to resolve customer complaints at the first point of contact. Where this is not achieved, you will be offered the opportunity to escalate your concerns to our internal complaints team.

If, after we provide a resolution for you, you are not satisfied that the outcome is equitable or that we have not done everything in our power to deliver a fair outcome, you may request escalation of the matter to our internal Dispute Resolution Advisory Team. This team will investigate the matter further and propose possible alternative options.

If you are still dissatisfied after working with our internal Dispute Resolution Advisory Team, you may escalate your concerns externally to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland:

- **Phone:** 1800 662 837 (freecall)
- **Online:** ewoq.com.au
- **Email:** complaints@ewoq.com.au
- **In writing:**
Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ)
PO Box 3640,
South Brisbane BC QLD 4101

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland is a free, fair and independent body established by the Queensland Government to investigate and resolve complaints and disputes between EWOQ scheme participants (Energy Retailers and Distributors) and small energy customers.

Contact Us

If you are experiencing family violence and need **assistance with your account** contact us:

Customer Service

13 10 46

8am - 5pm Mon to Fri

ergon.com.au/contact

National Relay Service

If you have a hearing or speech impairment, you can contact us through the National Relay Service (NRS). To make a relay call through NRS all you need to do is:

1. Contact the NRS via the contact number below or detail on the NRS national web page
2. Give the Ergon Energy number you want to call.

Speak and Listen

1300 555 727

TTY number

133 677

SMS relay number

0423 677 767

For more information, visit the NRS website:

www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub

Translating and Interpreting service

If you need assistance in a language other than English, you can contact us through this Australian Government service by phoning 13 14 50 and request the Ergon Energy phone number you wish to contact.



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