



# Do you need power for medical reasons?

**This fact sheet\* explains how to stay connected and safe if you rely on power for critical medical support.**

You must let your power company know if you, or someone at home, is medically dependent on power. For example, if you use critical electrical medical equipment such as a ventilator or a dialysis machine. Your power company can help you register as a medically dependent consumer.

## How can you register as medically dependent?

Registering as medically dependent is important so your power company knows you need extra support.

1. Tell your power company if you, or someone at home, needs power for medical reasons
2. Ask them for guidance if they need confirmation of medical dependency from a health practitioner eg, your doctor
3. Take the 'Confirmation of Medically Dependent Consumer Status' form to your doctor to complete and sign
4. Talk to your doctor about how to use your critical electrical medical equipment and what to do in a power cut
5. Send the completed form to your power company
6. Repeat these steps if you change power companies.



### **Confirmation of Medically Dependent Consumer Status form**

[ea.govt.nz/documents/Confirmation\\_of\\_status.pdf](http://ea.govt.nz/documents/Confirmation_of_status.pdf)

\* This fact sheet is for residential consumers

### What are your rights if medically dependent?

If you register as medically dependent, your power company cannot disconnect your power – even if you’ve missed a payment.

This protection also applies if you’re:

- In the process of registering as medically dependent
- Disputing a decision about your medically dependent status.

You must still pay your bills, but the company cannot disconnect your power.

### How to prepare for power cuts?

Even if you’re medically dependent on power, a constant power supply cannot always be guaranteed.

So, here’s how you can prepare for power cuts:

- Create an emergency response plan
- Consider what you might need (for example, backup batteries or a generator)
- Discuss the plan with your doctor and support team
- Store your plan in a place that’s safe and easy to find.

### » Emergency response plan for medically dependent electricity consumers

[ea.govt.nz/documents/Emergency\\_response\\_plan.pdf](https://ea.govt.nz/documents/Emergency_response_plan.pdf)

### What should you do in a power cut?

If there’s a power cut and you, or someone at home, is medically dependent:

- **Call 111** if you have a medical emergency
- Follow your emergency response plan
- Contact your power company immediately
- Contact Utilities Disputes Limited on **0800 22 33 40** if you cannot reach your power company.

### Concerned about how the power cut happened?

If you think the rules were broken, call:

- Electricity Authority on **0800 62 62 44**
- Utilities Disputes Limited on **0800 22 33 40**.

### » Consumer Care Obligations – a guide to your rights

[ea.govt.nz/your-power/consumer-care-obligations/](https://ea.govt.nz/your-power/consumer-care-obligations/)

### Which power plan is best if you’re medically dependent on power?

Power companies typically offer two types of power plans: prepay and postpay.

- Prepay: you pay before you use power – if your credit runs out, you lose power
- Postpay: you pay after using power – usually monthly.

Postpay plans are safer if you’re medically dependent. On these plans, your power company knows about your medical situation, they cannot cut off your power – even if you’ve missed a payment.

Take the time to select the right plan for you.

- Ask your power company for guidance – they can help you find the right plan
- Compare plans to find the best deal available.

### Do you need more info?

#### » If you rely on electricity for medical reasons –

for more information and advice

[ea.govt.nz/your-power/consumer-care-obligations/if-you-rely-on-electricity-for-medical-reasons/](https://ea.govt.nz/your-power/consumer-care-obligations/if-you-rely-on-electricity-for-medical-reasons/)

#### » Compare and switch to save \$\$ – how to compare and switch power plans

[ea.govt.nz/your-power/compare-and-switch/](https://ea.govt.nz/your-power/compare-and-switch/)

