



As recommended by the Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC) and the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and as advised by the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA), and following the example of other electric and water utilities, the City of Staples is modifying the utility disconnect policy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The City will modify the disconnect policy as follows:

- The City of Staples will extend Cold Weather Protection, for those who are qualified, until May 13, 2020, or until the state emergency order is lifted, whichever is longer.
- The City of Staples will postpone disconnection due to delinquent accounts for residential and small business customers that suffer hardship due to COVID-19.
 - The City will require a payment plan from those accounts that are delinquent due to hardship caused by COVID-19.
 - The City will request some form of documentation to show that hardship occurred due to COVID-19.
- The City of Staples will waive late fees that any residential or small business customer incurs because of the economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic.
- The City of Staples will continue with utility disconnects as usual for those who are delinquent and do not qualify for Cold Weather Protection, and who have not shown hardship due to COVID-19. The City will exercise discretion and may delay disconnects for those that do not qualify for exemptions listed above with a focus on health and safety.
- The City of Staples will continue to give out disconnect notices, even to those who qualify for Cold Weather Protection or are able to show hardship.
 - A disconnect notice may make it easier for a customer to receive crisis funds.
- These policy changes shall not affect the City's ability to disconnect a customer's service for public safety concerns unrelated to non-payment of services.

This policy will go into effect immediately, but will be subject to approval by the Public Works Commission and the Staples City Council.