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Unpaid bills (gas or electricity, water): what are the consequences?

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Your gas or electricity supplier can shut down if you don't pay your bill. However, he must follow a strict procedure. On the other hand, it is forbidden for any water dispenser to turn off the water in case of an unpaid payment, and this throughout the year.

The procedure differs depending on whether the unpaid amount relates to an energy bill (gas or electricity) or a water bill.

Energy bill (gas or electricity) ^

The consequences vary depending on whether you are benefiting from the energy check (<https://www.service-public.gouv.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F33667?lang=en>) because your income does not exceed certain ceilings, or you have already received assistance from Solidarity Housing Fund (FSL) (<https://www.service-public.gouv.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F1334?lang=en>) in the last 12 months.

If you are not in any of these situations, the general case applies.

General case

Gas invoice

You must pay your gas bill within 14 days of its issue date or payment deadline.

Please note

In case of difficulty, contact your gas supplier. He can offer you a solution such as payment staggering.

If you do not pay your bill within this 14-day period, your gas supplier will send you a **1^{er} mail**. This letter informs you that you have an additional 15 days to pay your bill. This letter also informs you of the possibilities of cutting off gas.

If you do not pay your invoice at the end of the 15-day period, your supplier informs you by **2^e mail** that you have a final 20-day period to pay your bill.

If you still do not pay your bill at the end of this 20-day period, your supplier can shut off the gas once he has informed you by a **3^e mail**.

FYI

Of 1^{er} from november to march 31, gas cuts are prohibited. The gas outages can therefore take place between April and October inclusive.

Electricity bill

You must pay your electricity bill within 14 days of its issue date or payment deadline.

Please note

In case of difficulty, contact your electricity supplier. He can offer you a solution such as payment staggering.

If you do not pay your bill within this 14-day period, your electricity provider will send you a **1^{er} mail**. This letter informs you that you have an additional 15 days to pay your bill. This letter also informs you of the possibilities of reducing or cutting your electricity.

If you do not pay your invoice at the end of the 15-day period, your supplier informs you by **2^e mail** that you have a final 20-day period to pay your bill.

If you still do not pay your bill at the end of this 20-day period, your supplier may reduce or cut electricity once he has informed you by a **3^e mail**.

FYI

Of 1^{er} from november to march 31, electricity cuts are prohibited. However, the power of your electricity can be reduced during this period. Thus, power cuts can occur between April and October inclusive. However, if you are at EDF, your electricity is maintained throughout the year.

Beneficiary of the energy check or of an aid from the FSL

Gas invoice

You must pay your energy bill within 14 days of its issue date or payment deadline.

Please note

In case of difficulty, contact your gas supplier. He can offer you a solution such as payment staggering.

If you do not pay your bill within this 14-day period, your gas supplier will send you a **1^{er} mail**. This letter informs you that you have an additional 30 days to pay your bill. This letter also informs you of the possibilities of cutting off the gas.

If you do not pay your invoice at the end of the 30-day period, your supplier informs you by **2^e mail** after a final delay of 20 days, your gas can be cut off. This letter also tells you that you can appeal to the FSL to request financial assistance to pay your bill.

If you do not appeal to the FSL, your gas may be cut off. On the other hand, recourse to the FSL allows the latter period of 20 days to be interrupted. The FSL then informs your supplier of your appeal.

The FSL has 2 months to respond and grant you this help or not.

If after 2 months you have not received a favorable response from the FSL granting you aid, your supplier can cut off the gas as soon as he has informed you by a **3^e mail**.

FYI

Of 1^{er} from november to march 31, gas cuts are prohibited. The gas outages can therefore take place between April and October inclusive.

Electricity bill

You have a Linky counter

You must pay your energy bill within 14 days of its issue date or payment deadline.

If you do not pay your bill within this 14-day period, your electricity provider will send you a **1^{er} mail**. This letter informs you that you have an additional 30 days to pay your bill. This letter also informs you of the possibilities of reducing or cutting your electricity.

If you do not pay your bill at the end of the 30-day period, you have a new minimum 60-day period during which your electricity is maintained, without interruption but with reduced power up to 1 kilovolt-meter (kVA). This allows you to light up and keep your fridge in working order.

During this minimum period of 60 days, your electricity supplier will contact you in writing and orally to find an agreement on the payment of the invoice. If you don't respond or if you agree, he can turn off the power. Your supplier must inform you at least 20 days in advance by a **2^e mail**. This letter also tells you that you can appeal to the FSL to request financial assistance to pay your bill.

If you do not make a complaint to the FSL, your electricity will be cut off. On the other hand, the use of the FSL allows the latter period to be interrupted. The FSL then informs your supplier of your appeal.

The FSL has 2 months to respond and grant you this help or not.

If after 2 months you have not received a favorable response from the FSL granting you aid, your supplier may cut off electricity once he has informed you by a **3^e mail**.

FYI

Of 1^{er} from november to march 31, electricity cuts are prohibited. In addition, if you are at EDF, your electricity is maintained throughout the year.

You don't have a Linky counter

You must pay your energy bill within 14 days of its issue date or payment deadline.

Please note

In case of difficulty, contact your electricity supplier. He can offer you a solution such as payment staggering.

If you do not pay your bill within this 14-day period, your electricity provider will send you a **1^{er} mail**. This letter informs you that you have an additional 30 days to pay your bill. This letter also informs you of the possibilities of cutting off or reducing your electricity.

If you do not pay your invoice at the end of the 30-day period, your supplier informs you by **2^e mail** after a last 20 days, your electricity will be cut or reduced. This letter also tells you that you can appeal to the FSL to request financial assistance to pay your bill.

If you do not make a complaint to the FSL, your electricity will be cut or reduced. On the other hand, recourse to the FSL allows the latter period of 20 days to be interrupted. The FSL then informs your supplier of your appeal.

The FSL has 2 months to respond and grant you this help or not.

If after 2 months you have not received a favorable response from the FSL granting you aid, your supplier may cut or reduce electricity once he has informed you by a **3^e mail**.

FYI

Of 1^{er} from november to march 31, electricity cuts are prohibited. In addition, if you are at EDF, your electricity is maintained throughout the year.

Water invoice

You must pay your water bill within 14 days of its issue date or payment deadline.

Please note

In case of difficulty, contact your water distributor. He can offer you a solution such as payment staggering.

If you do not pay your bill within this period, your water distributor will send you a **1^{er} mail**. This letter informs you that you have an additional 15 days to pay your bill.

If you do not pay your bill at the end of the 15-day period, your water distributor informs you by **2^e mail** that you can appeal to the Solidarity Housing Fund (FSL) (<https://www.service-public.gouv.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F1334?lang=en>) to request financial assistance to pay your bill. This appeal allows the latter period of 15 days to be interrupted. The FSL informs your distributor of your appeal.

If after 2 months you have not received a favorable response from the FSL granting you aid, you will have to pay the full invoice. If you don't pay, a recovery procedure (<https://www.service-public.gouv.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N277?lang=en>) will be engaged.

Warning

It is forbidden for any water distributor to cut the water of your principal residence even in case of unpaid and this throughout the year.

Statute and miscellaneous references

Decree No. 2008-780 of 13 August 2008 on the procedure applicable in the case of unpaid electricity, gas, heat and water bills (<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/loda/id/JORFTEXT000019325694/?lang=en>).

Code of Social Action and Families: Article L115-3 (https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/article_lc/LEGIARTI000031130667/?lang=en).

FAQ

National Energy Ombudsman: how to use it? (<https://www.service-public.gouv.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F20820?lang=en>).

Water Ombudsman: how to use it? (<https://www.service-public.gouv.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F20762?lang=en>).

What should you do if your water bill goes up unexpectedly?

(<https://www.service-public.gouv.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F389?lang=en>).

How is the Solidarity Fund for Housing (FSL) helping? (<https://www.service-public.gouv.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F1334?lang=en>).

Additional topics

Aid for payment of bills: water, telephone, electricity, gas (<https://www.service-public.gouv.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N23557?lang=en>).

Service-Public.fr

Get help to pay your unpaid water bill (<https://www.inc-conso.fr/content/beneficier-dune-aide-pour-payer-sa-facture-deau?lang=en>).

National Institute of Consumer Affairs (INC)

Fact sheets by life event

I'm buying a house (<https://www.service-public.gouv.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F15913>).

I'm moving to France (<https://www.service-public.gouv.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F14128>).