



We are independent. Our complaint resolution service is free, fair and easy to use. If we can't help you, we will tell you about someone who can.

Unplanned interruptions

Unplanned interruptions to your electricity, gas or water supply can be caused by:

- weather events such as extreme heat, strong winds, heavy rain, lightning and bushfires
- car accidents
- damage from animals
- vandalism
- equipment failure or network overload
- underground works.

If this happens, distributors must do everything they can to restore supply as soon as possible.

Information about unplanned interruptions

Distributors must tell you:

- when and where supply has been interrupted
- when they think supply will be restored.

They must make this information available by a 24-hour phone number on their websites.

Electricity distributors must do this within 30 minutes of the unplanned interruption happening.

Some distributors use social media or mobile phone apps to give customers real-time updates. See your distributor's website for details.

What to do when your supply is interrupted

If your supply is interrupted, call your distributor or check their website. You can get your distributor's details from your bill or from your provider.

If you sign up to SA Power Networks' power outage messaging service, you will get alerts when the power goes out at your property. Call 131 261 or visit www.sapowernetworks.com.au.

Planned interruptions

Energy, gas and water distributors need to interrupt supply from time to time to carry out upgrades and essential maintenance and repair work.

Electricity and gas distributors have the right to interrupt supply at any time, but they must:

- tell customers in writing when the planned interruption will be and how long it will last
- give customers at least 4 business days' notice.

The notice must:

- state the date, time and expected duration of the interruption
- tell customers to call the distributor with any enquiries and give 24-hour phone number.

Life support customers

Planned interruptions will affect medical life support equipment that relies on the power supply.

Anyone depending on life support equipment should contact their provider to register as a life support customer. Life support customers should also:

- tell their provider if their address or phone number changes
- have emergency and backup plans in place in case their supply goes off without warning.

Registering as a life support customer will help distributors schedule planned interruptions, but it won't stop planned interruptions.

Registered life support customers will receive the same four-day notice as other customers.

For more information, see our fact sheet on life support.

Protecting yourself

Business and residential customers should have insurance that covers them for any potential loss or damage caused by supply interruptions.

Business customers should also take reasonable steps to minimise the risk of loss or damage caused by poor quality or unreliable electricity supply. This includes installing surge protectors, uninterruptable power supply systems, phase failure protection and generators.

If your insurance company denies a claim you make, the Australian Financial Complaints Authority may be able to help you. Visit afca.org.au or call 1800 931 678.

Compensation for loss or damage

Distributors and providers are liable for events they caused 'in bad faith' or through 'negligence'.

Energy distributors are allowed to limit their liability through their customer contracts. Most contracts say that:

- the quality and reliability of your electricity supply is subject to some factors that may be beyond the distributor's control
- the distributor is not responsible for supply events that are outside of their control such as:
 - technical limitations
 - random failures on their distribution system
 - system demands
 - other incidents including accidents, weather conditions and damage caused by people.

Making a claim

If you suffer damage or lose money because of an event that an energy or water distributor could control, you may be able to claim compensation.

You will first need to fill in a claim form and provide evidence such as receipts, photos, technical reports or damaged appliances to support your claim.

The distributor will then assess your claim.

If the distributor denies your claim, it must:

- write to you to tell you why
- give you our contact details so you can contact us for help if you don't agree with the decision.

How we can help

We are independent. We can review the decision and assess if it is fair and reasonable.

Read our fact sheet *Making a complaint* to learn more about how we can help you.

Payment for electricity interruptions

SA Power Networks must meet guaranteed service levels (GSL). If they don't, they must pay their customers to acknowledge the inconvenience.

For example, SA Power Networks must make an automatic GSL payment to you if:

- your supply is interrupted for more than 20 hours in a year
- your supply is interrupted more than 9 times in a year.

SA Power network does not have to make GSL payments for:

- disconnections required by an emergency
- faults caused by or affecting one customer
- interruptions that last less than three minutes
- planned interruptions when they give your notice in writing beforehand.

For more information about electricity GSLs and supply service standards, visit

www.escosa.sa.gov.au.