ActewAGL

ActewAGL Family Violence Policy

If there's an immediate threat to your safety, please call 000 - Emergency.

ActewAGL is committed to supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees and customers and does not tolerate family and domestic violence.

ActewAGL is here to support its customers.

ActewAGL is committed to providing confidential, respectful and safe assistance to customers experiencing or affected by family violence. The safety of affected customers is the first and paramount consideration in all interactions, decisions, and support provided by ActewAGL.

ActewAGL's Family Violence Policy sets out its commitment and the mechanisms through which it will provide individualised and meaningful support for customers affected by family violence.

What does this policy cover?

ActewAGL's Family Violence Policy outlines how residential and small business customers affected by family violence can receive assistance through ActewAGL. It details the ways in which ActewAGL will support:

- safe account access;
- flexible payment options;
- protection from disconnection; and
- account separation.

What is family violence?

Family violence is not limited to physical abuse. Family violence can include threatening, coercive, dominating or psychologically abusive behaviour that occurs within a family or 'family-like' relationship that causes an individual to fear for their safety or wellbeing, or that of someone else.

Family violence can happen in any family structure, domestic relationship and culturally or community-recognised union, including (but not limited to) interactions:

- between intimate partners;
- between children and parents;
- between seniors and carers or family members; and/or
- between immediate relations living in the same home.

Some examples of family violence include:

- a partner making an individual dependent on them by controlling their finances;
- emotional, psychological, or sexual abuse by a dating partner;
- mistreatment of a child by another parent or caregiver;
- violent behaviour towards a parent by an adolescent dependent; and/or
- controlling behaviours, negligence, or mistreatment by a family member or friend that lives or stays in an individual's home.

ActewAGL has specialised team members ready to provide meaningful support.

ActewAGL's Credit & Affordability team is a specialist group of team members, trained to identify and support customers affected by family violence. This training supports team members to:

- identify and respond to both disclosures and indicators of family violence, including where a customer has not explicitly disclosed their circumstances;
- engage with customers in a sensitive, safe and non-judgmental manner;
- apply this policy and associated protections appropriately and consistently; and
- provide safe, appropriate and supportive assistance tailored to the customer's circumstances.

The Credit & Affordability team provides a broad range of support measures relevant to energy account/s and can help to ensure individuals affected by family violence do not need to repeatedly disclose information regarding their circumstances. Impacted individuals do not need to provide any documentary evidence of family violence.

ActewAGL will help protect the security of those affected by family violence.

ActewAGL understands the importance of account security, and has developed additional safeguard options for affected customer account/s. We've also added extra measures to increase the protection of the account from unauthorised third parties and perpetrators.

Where ActewAGL becomes aware, or has reasonable grounds to believe that a customer is being (or have been) affected by family violence, the following measures may be applied to the relevant energy account/s:

- ActewAGL may remove contact names from an account and ask for a PIN number or password that allows only the individual or their authorised contact to access the account/s.
- Multi-factor authentication will be used to ensure that any attempt to access the account is authenticated only by the customer or their authorised contact.
- A new account may be created for an affected individual under an alias, if the customer considers this is warranted.
- A flag will be placed on a customer's energy account/s to indicate it is the subject of additional protections as a result of circumstances advised by the customer.
- ActewAGL may send correspondence regarding the account from an email inbox which is the subject of additional restrictions. Where relevant, documents or notes regarding this correspondence will not be stored on the customer's primary account file, and sensitive information may be redacted or removed.
- Communications will be provided to the customer only by the method of communication they nominate. ActewAGL may limit the written correspondence it sends if the customer considers this appropriate.
- ActewAGL will maintain records of the arrangements agreed with the customer regarding their energy account/s.

If the customer is managing a debt with the support of a financial counsellor or advocate, ActewAGL will need the customer's written permission if the customer would like a financial counsellor or advocate to be able to discuss their energy account/s on their behalf. Once written permission is received by ActewAGL, ActewAGL can engage directly with the authorised contact in accordance with the consent and instructions provided.

ActewAGL will assist affected customers with managing their energy bills.

ActewAGL understands that circumstances beyond an individual's control can lead to financial difficulties or stress. To ensure ActewAGL can provide the most meaningful support, customers affected by family violence are encouraged to call 1300 138 574 for timely access to support.

If a customer is experiencing hardship, they may be eligible for tailored support through ActewAGL's Financial Hardship Policy, which can be found at actewagl.com.au/hardship-policy, primarily administered by ActewAGL's Credit & Affordability team (see actewagl.com.au/financial-hardship-programs).

ActewAGL will work with each customer to confirm the support measures most suited to their personal circumstances. Once a customer engages with ActewAGL, there are a number of ways ActewAGL can help, including:

- Establishing an agreed payment arrangement to manage the individual's account/s and ensure their energy services remain connected.
- Providing a simple process for affected customers to separate from joint accounts with perpetrators.
- If the customer has a joint account that is in debt, ActewAGL will work with them on how this can be managed relevant to their personal circumstances.

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- ActewAGL will work with each customer in relation to debts incurred while they are/were being affected by family violence. ActewAGL will waive applicable late payment fees and will consider waiving or adjusting debt amounts incurred during this period, taking into account the customer's circumstances and the impacts of family violence.
- ActewAGL will review the customer's account to ensure they are on the best discounted plan for their energy usage.
- Provide information to affected customers about support programs, including concessions, grants, vouchers and other appropriate programs.
- ActewAGL can review the customer's account for any eligible appliance replacement or upgrade programs through ActewAGL or the ACT or NSW Governments. These programs support increased energy efficiency and reduced emissions and can also help reduce the customer's energy costs.

ActewAGL encourages the use of Centrepay for account payments. Centrepay is a free bill paying service, where regular deductions can be made from a customer's Centrelink payment and applied directly to their energy account/s. For customers wishing to make payments through Centrepay, ActewAGL's reference number is 555 053 532S.

ActewAGL will help with managing any outstanding debts.

ActewAGL will consider the potential impact of any pending debt recovery action. If there has been historic debt recovery through a third-party debt collector, ActewAGL will consider the suspension or cessation of the third-party debt-collection process. ActewAGL will ensure that all third-party providers acting on their behalf are subject to the same obligations under this policy.

ActewAGL will help affected customers stay connected.

ActewAGL will work with affected customers to keep their energy connected and will never disconnect while a customer is receiving support and maintaining their payment arrangements.

For customers on ActewAGL's Staying Connected program, ActewAGL will ensure their energy remains connected while they are participating in the program.

Accessing support through ActewAGL

Support through ActewAGL's Family Violence Policy can be accessed directly by customers or through their advocates (if authorised by the customer). Requests for support can be made by email to StayingConnected@actewagl.com.au, calling 1300 138 574 or completing ActewAGL's online form, which can be found at actewagl.com.au/financial-hardship-programs

If a customer is managing a debt with the support of a financial counsellor or advocate, ActewAGL requires written permission to engage with the nominated support person. Once written permission is received, ActewAGL will engage with the customer's nominated contact in accordance with the customer's consent and instructions.

ActewAGL may adjust the level and type of support provided to a customer based on their circumstances. This may occur:

- by mutual agreement between ActewAGL, the customer and/or advocate;
- when an agreed outcome has been reached;
- where ongoing engagement or contact is no longer possible, appropriate, or necessary;
- where there is evidence of misuse of the policy, or fraudulent or unlawful activity in connection with the support provided.

Support adjustments may include changes to the protections or assistance applied to an account, such as the application of credit processes or other account management actions.

ActewAGL will continue to maintain appropriate account controls to protect customer privacy, including retaining family violence indicators on the account. However, in circumstances where support is no longer required, protections against credit processes may be reviewed.

Where an account has been closed with no outstanding balance and there has been no contact for an extended period, ActewAGL may cease active monitoring of account access.

Managing privacy of personal information

ActewAGL will comply with all relevant privacy legislation in relation to each customer's personal information. Customers can find a summary of ActewAGL's Privacy Policy on its website at actewagl.com.au/legal/privacy. ActewAGL's Privacy Officer can be contacted by emailing Privacy@actewagl.com.au.

Monitoring and Review

ActewAGL recognises that approaches to supporting customers affected by family violence continue to evolve. ActewAGL will regularly monitor and review this policy and its application to ensure it remains effective, up to date, and aligned with good industry practice, regulatory expectations, and the needs of customers affected by family violence.

Other supports

ActewAGL has developed this Policy in conjunction with members of the ACT Community Sector, who are also available to provide support as needed.

DVCS Available to anyone living in the ACT region affected by domestic and family violence.	24/7 Crisis Line - (02) 6280 0900 SMS: 0421 268 492 Email: crisis@dvcs.org.au
1800RESPECT – outside the ACT National domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service.	Ph: 1800 737 732 www.1800respect.org.au
Care Inc Community organisation that provides free and confidential support and assistance to people who are experiencing financial difficulty.	Ph: 02 6257 1788 www.carefcs.org
National Debt Helpline Free financial counselling services – get help in managing bills and debts.	Ph: 1800 007 007 www.ndh.org.au
ACT Government Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Office	www.communityservices.act.gov.au/domestic-and-family-violence-support

Translation services

Need language assistance? 13 14 50
Hearing impaired and need a TTY service? 13 36 77

Language assistance:

如果您需要幫助，請打電話給下面的號碼。
¿Necesita un intérprete? Llame al número indicado abajo.
هل تحتاج إلى مترجم؟ اتصل بالرقم أدناه.
13 14 50

Trebate li pomoć tumača? Nazovite niže navedeni broj.
Nếu quí vị cần sự giúp đỡ, vui lòng gọi số bên dưới.
Se vi serve un interprete, telefonate al seguente numero.
Αν χρειάζεστε διερμηνέα, τηλεφωνείτε στον αριθμό παρακάτω.