

FAMILY VIOLENCE POLICY

Tas Gas Retail have developed guidelines to deliver flexible ongoing support for our customers experiencing family violence. These guidelines will help us respect and care for each affected customer in every interaction.

If you're in a personal relationship that makes you feel unsafe, afraid or powerless – no matter what your background – then you may be experiencing family and/or domestic violence. It's more common than you think.

If you are, or think you may be experiencing family violence, you can contact 1800 Respect (1800 737 732) for professional support. They are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Family violence can be defined as:

- physical abuse; including any use of physical force against another person
- sexual abuse; including any form of forced or unwanted sexual activity
- verbal abuse; including yelling, screaming or consistently making statements that negatively label a person
- emotional abuse
- financial abuse
- social abuse; such as preventing a person from spending time with family and friends, and isolating them from their support networks.

Common forms of violence in families include:

- spouse/partner abuse (violence among adult partners and ex-partners)
- elder abuse (an intentional act, or failure to act, by a caregiver or another person)
- child abuse/neglect (abuse/neglect of children by an adult)
- parental abuse (violence perpetrated by a child against their parent)
- sibling abuse (violence between siblings).

Family violence can also be economic in nature impacting affected customers by:

- insisting an energy account is in an affected customer's name and refusing to contribute to the cost
- holding an energy account jointly and refusing to contribute to the cost
- holding an energy account in the perpetrator's name and not paying bills, resulting in disconnection
- holding the account in the perpetrator's name and threatening to have the service disconnected.

We understand that family violence causes many difficulties (not just financial) and we will assist our customers to get the best possible outcomes. We train our customer service staff to recognise customers who may be experiencing family and domestic violence, and to know what to do to help them.

Keeping you safe is our main concern. You have rights to privacy, and we have a privacy policy that sets out what we do to ensure this. Visit www.tasgas.com.au/privacy for more information.

We also understand that sometimes it may not be safe to send information to your home address, so we've developed ways to make sure you receive the information you need, while keeping your information secure.

We understand that any form of family and domestic violence may cause payment difficulty and even financial hardship. We ask that you please reach out (sooner rather than later) if this is the

case with you – we have a number of ways we can help you stay connected and options available to assist under our payment support program.

For more information on our payment support program please visit <https://www.tasgas.com.au/vic/customer-service/customer-payment-support> or call us on 1800 750 750 and we can post you a copy.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU....

We will:

- Case-manage customers affected by family violence on an individual basis with
- consideration given to debt deferment, allocation of debt and debt collection activities, hardship and access to Utility Relief Grants and concessions.
- Make sure information regarding customers affected by family violence is handled
- securely and confidentially. We will ask for details to verify your identity, and for added security we can also place a password on your account.
- Make sure processes are in place to avoid customers having to repeat disclosure of their family violence, and provide for continuity of service for customers affected by family violence.
- Provide information to customers on energy efficiency, Government grants and concessions, dispute resolution processes and payment options that are available to them.
- Refer customers who may be affected by family violence to specialist family violence service(s).
- Provide ongoing, annual training to all relevant employees to gain awareness and understanding of issues related to family violence as well as training on identifying and responding to the complex issues associated with family violence, so that they can work with customers in a respectful and appropriate manner.
- Provide training to all relevant employees on how to appropriately implement the
- family violence guidelines of the business and provide support to affected customers.
- Only seek documentary evidence where it is appropriate when considering debt
- management or de-energisation of a site and will limit our request to what is accessible or reasonably required.
- Publish and provide a copy (on request) of these guidelines and referral agencies for
- customers on our website.
- Review this policy regularly to ensure it remains relevant to affected customers.

If you are experiencing family violence, support services are available. Please see our list below.

REFERRAL GROUP:

GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

Police	Law enforcement services – call if you or your child/family is in immediate danger	Call 000
Department of Human Services	Centrelink, Medicare, Child Support services – social workers can provide short term counselling, support and information, and refer you to other support services	Social Work Services, Tel: 13 28 50 Multilingual, Tel: 13 12 02 www.humanservices.gov.au

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Money Minded	Website to help build skills, knowledge and confidence in managing money	www.moneyminded.com.au
National Debt Helpline	Free financial counselling services – get help in managing bills and debts	Tel: 1800 007 007 www.ndh.org.au

HELP WITH LEGAL ISSUES

National Association of Community Legal Centres	A directory of not-for-profit community law centres in Australia, focusing on the disadvantaged and people with special needs – request legal and related services	www.naclc.org.au
Women's Legal Services Australia	A national network of community legal centres that specialise in women's legal issues – request legal advice or a referral	www.wlsa.org.au

SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS

Lifeline	Crisis support services	Tel: 13 11 14 Open 24x7
1800 RESPECT	Free, confidential family violence and sexual assault counselling services	Tel: 1800 737 732 Open 24x7 www.1800respect.org.au
Family Relationship Advice Line	Information and advice on family relationship issues and parenting arrangements after separation	Tel: 1800 050 321 Open weekdays 8am–8pm, and 10am–4pm on Saturdays
Relationships Australia	Counselling, mediation and family dispute resolution services	Tel: 1800 364 277 Local call cost from anywhere in Australia
MensLine Australia	Telephone and online support services for men	Tel: 1300 78 99 78 www.mensline.org.au
WIRE Women's Information – Any woman. Any issue.	Free generalist information, support and referral service for Victorian women – visit the Walk-in Information Centre, call the phone support line or start an online chat.	Tel: 1300 134 130 www.wire.org.au Walk-in Information Centre 372 Spencer St, West Melbourne, Vic. Open weekdays from 9:30am–4:30pm.