

Victoria Standard Retail Contract Terms and Conditions



PREAMBLE

This contract is about the sale of energy to you as a small customer at your premises. It is a standard retail contract that starts without you having to sign a document agreeing to these terms and conditions.

In addition to this contract, the energy laws and other consumer laws also contain rules about the sale of energy and we will comply with these rules in our dealings with you. For example, the Energy Retail Code sets out specific rights and obligations about energy marketing, payment methods and arrangements for customers experiencing payment difficulties.

Until the National Energy Retail Law and the National Energy Retail Rules are adopted in Victoria, the energy laws applicable in Victoria are the *Gas Industry Act 2001* and the Energy Retail Code made by the Essential Services Commission.

More information about this contract and other matters is on our website www.vic.tasgas.com.au.

1. THE PARTIES

This contract is between:

Tas Gas Retail Pty Ltd (ABN 90 110 370 726) who sells energy to you at your premises (in this contract referred to as “we”, “our” or “us”); and

You, the customer to whom this contract applies (in this contract referred to as “you” or “your”).

2. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

(a) Terms used in this contract have the same meanings as they have in the Energy Retail Code. However for ease of reference, a simplified explanation of some terms is given at the end of this contract.

(b) Where the simplified explanations given at the end of this contract differ from the definitions in the Energy Retail Code, the definitions in the Energy Retail Code prevail.

3. DO THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLY TO YOU?

3.1 These are our terms and conditions

This contract sets out the terms and conditions for a standard retail contract for a small customer under the Energy Retail Code.

3.2 Application of these terms and conditions

These terms and conditions apply to you if:

- (a) you are a residential customer; or
- (b) you are a business customer who is a small customer; and
- (c) you request us to sell energy to you at your premises; and
- (d) you are not being sold energy for the premises under a market retail contract.

4. WHAT IS THE TERM OF THIS CONTRACT?

4.1 When does this contract start?

This contract starts on the date you satisfy any pre-conditions set out in the Energy Retail Code, including giving us *acceptable identification* and your contact details for billing purposes.

4.2 When does this contract end?

- (a) This contract ends:
 - (i) if you give us a notice stating you wish to end the contract—subject to paragraph (b), on a date advised by us of which we will give you at least 5 but no more than 20 *business days*’ notice; or
 - (ii) if you are no longer a small customer:
 - (A) subject to paragraph (b), on a date specified by us, of which we will give you at least 5 but no more than 20 *business days*’ notice; or
 - (B) if you have not told us of a change in the use of your energy—from the time of the change in use; or
 - (iii) if we both agree to a date to end the contract—on the date that is agreed; or
 - (iv) if you start to buy energy for the premises from us or a different retailer under a customer retail contract—on the date the market retail contract starts; or

- (v) if a different customer starts to buy energy for the premises—on the date that customer’s contract starts; or
- (vi) if the premises are disconnected and you have not met the requirements in the Energy Retail Code for reconnection—10 *business days* from the date of disconnection.

(b) If you do not give us safe and unhindered access to the premises to conduct a final meter reading (where relevant), this contract will not end under paragraph (a)(i) or (ii) until we have issued you a final bill and you have paid any outstanding amount for the sale of energy.

(c) Rights and obligations accrued Tas Gas before the end of this contract continue despite the end of the contract, including any obligations to pay amounts to us.

4.3 Vacating your Premises

(a) If you are vacating your premises, you must provide your forwarding address to us for your final bill in addition to a notice under clause 4.2(a)(i) of this contract.

(b) When we receive the notice, we must use our best endeavours to arrange for the reading of the *meter* on the date specified in your notice (or as soon as possible after that date if you do not provide access to your *meter* on that date) and send a final bill to you at the forwarding address stated in your notice.

(c) You will continue to be responsible for charges for the premises until your contract ends in accordance with clause 4.2 of this contract.

5. SCOPE OF THIS CONTRACT

5.1 What is covered by this contract?

(a) Under this contract we agree to sell you energy at your premises. We also agree to meet other obligations set out in this contract and to comply with the energy laws.

(b) In return, you agree:

- (i) to be responsible for charges for energy supplied to the premises until this contract ends under clause 4.2 even if you vacate the premises earlier; and
- (ii) to pay the amounts billed by us under this contract; and
- (iii) to meet your obligations under this contract and the energy laws.

6. YOUR GENERAL OBLIGATIONS

6.1 Full information

You must give us any information we reasonably require for the purposes of this contract. The information must be correct, and you must not mislead or deceive us in relation to any information provided to us.

6.2 Updating information

You must tell us promptly if information you have provided to us changes, including if your billing address changes or if your use of energy changes (for example, if you start running a business at the premises).

6.3 Life support equipment

- (a) Before this contract starts, we were required to ask you whether a person residing or intending to reside at your premises requires *life support equipment*.
- (b) If a person living or intending to live at your premises requires *life support equipment*, you must:
 - i. advise us that the person requires *life support equipment*;
 - ii. register the premises with us or your distributor; and
 - iii. upon receipt of a *medical confirmation form*, provide *medical confirmation* for the premises.
- (c) Subject to satisfying the requirements in this Code, the *Electricity Distribution Code* or the *Gas Distribution System Code*, your premises may cease to be registered as having *life support equipment* if *medical confirmation* is not provided to us or your distributor.
- (d) You must tell us or your distributor if the *life support equipment* is no longer required at the premises.
- (e) If you tell us that a person living or intending to live at your premises requires *life support equipment*, we must give you:

- i. at least 50 business days to provide medical confirmation for the premises;
- ii. general advice that there may be a *distributor planned interruption or unplanned interruption*; and
- iii. information to assist you to prepare a plan of action in case of an unplanned interruption; and
- iv. emergency telephone contact numbers.

6.4 Obligations if you are not an owner

If you cannot meet an obligation relating to your premises under this contract because you are not the owner you will not be in breach of the obligation if you take all reasonable steps to ensure that the owner or other person responsible for the premises fulfils the obligation.

7. OUR LIABILITY

- (a) The quality and reliability of your electricity supply and the quality, pressure and continuity of your gas supply is subject to a variety of factors that are beyond our control as your retailer, including accidents, emergencies, weather conditions, vandalism, system demand, the technical limitations of the distribution system and the acts of other persons (such as your distributor), including at the direction of a *relevant authority*.
- (b) To the extent permitted by law, we give no condition, warranty or undertaking, and we make no representation to you, about the condition or suitability of energy, its quality, fitness for purpose or safety, other than those set out in this contract.
- (c) Unless we have acted in bad faith or negligently, section 232 of the *Gas Industry Act 2001* or section 33 of the *Gas Safety Act 1997* excludes our liability for any loss or damage you suffer as a result of the total or partial failure to supply energy to your premises, which includes any loss or damage you suffer as a result of the defective supply of energy.

8. PRICE FOR ENERGY AND OTHER SERVICES

8.1 What are our tariffs and charges?

- (a) Our tariffs and charges for the sale of energy to you under this contract are our standing offer prices. These are published on our website and include your distributor's charges.
- (b) Different tariffs and charges may apply to you depending on your circumstances. The conditions for each tariff and charge are set out in our standing offer prices.

Note: We do not impose any charges for the termination of this contract.

8.2 Changes to tariffs and charges

- (a) If we vary our standing offer prices, we will publish the variation in a newspaper and on our website at least 10 *business days* before it starts. We will also include details with your next bill if the variation affects you.
- (b) Our standing offer prices will not be varied more often than once every 6 months.

8.3 Variation of tariff due to change of use

If a change in your use of energy means you are no longer eligible for the particular tariff you are on, we may transfer you to a new tariff under our standing offer prices:

- (a) if you notify us there has been a change of use—from the date of notification; or
- (b) if you have not notified us of the change of use—retrospectively from the date the change of use occurred.

8.4 Variation of tariff or type of tariff on request

- (a) If you think you satisfy the conditions applying to another tariff or type of tariff under our standing offer prices, you can ask us to review your current circumstances to see whether that tariff or type of tariff can apply to you.
- (b) If you meet the requirements for another tariff or type of tariff and request us to do so, we must:
 - (i) transfer you to that other tariff within 10 *business days*; or
 - (ii) transfer you to that other type of tariff from the date the *meter* is read or the type of *meter* is changed (if needed).

8.5 Changes to tariffs or type of tariff during a billing cycle

If a tariff applying to you changes during a billing cycle, we will calculate your next bill on a proportionate basis.

8.6 GST

Amounts specified in the standing offer prices from time to time and other amounts payable under this contract are inclusive of *GST*.

9. BILLING

9.1 General

We will send a bill to you as soon as possible after the end of each billing cycle. We will send the bill:

- (a) to you at the address nominated by you; or
- (b) to a person authorised in writing by you to act on your behalf at the address specified by you.

9.2 Calculating the bill

Bills we send to you ('your bills') will be calculated on:

- (a) the amount of energy consumed at your premises during the billing cycle (using information obtained from reading your meter or otherwise in accordance with the Energy Retail Code); and
- (b) the amount of fees and charges for any other services provided under this contract during the billing cycle; and
- (c) the charges payable for services provided by your distributor, including connection charges if you have asked for a new connection or connection alteration and have not made alternative arrangements with your distributor.

9.3 Estimating the energy usage

- (a) We may estimate the amount of energy consumed at your premises if your *meter* cannot be read, if your metering data is not obtained (for example, if access to the *meter* is not given or the meter breaks down or is faulty), or if you otherwise give us your explicit informed consent to do so.
- (b) If we estimate the amount of energy consumed at your premises to calculate a bill, we must:
 - (i) clearly state on the bill that it is based on an estimation; and
 - (ii) when your *meter* is later read, adjust your bill for the difference between the estimate and the energy actually used.
- (c) If the later *meter* read shows that you have been undercharged, we will allow you to pay the undercharged amount in instalments, over the same period of time during which the *meter* was not read (if less than 12 months), or otherwise over 12 months.
- (d) If the *meter* has not been read due to your actions, and you request us to replace the estimated bill with a bill based on an actual reading of the *meter*, we will comply with your request but may charge you any cost we incur in doing so.

9.4 Your historical billing information

Upon request, we must give you information about your billing history for the previous 2 years free of charge. However, we may charge you if we have already given you this information in the previous 12 months, or if you require information going back more than 2 years.

9.5 Bill smoothing

We may, where you agree, arrange for you to pay your bills under a bill smoothing arrangement, which is based on a 12 monthly estimate of your energy consumption.

10. PAYING YOUR BILL

10.1 What you have to pay

You must pay to us the amount shown on each bill by the date for payment (the *pay-by date*) on the bill. The *pay-by date* will be no earlier than 13 *business days* from the date on which we issue your bill.

10.2 Issue of reminder notices

If you have not paid your bill by the *pay-by date*, we will send you a *reminder notice* that payment is required. The *reminder notice* will give you a further due date for payment which will be not less than 6 *business days* after we issue the notice.

10.3 Difficulties in paying

If you have difficulties paying your bill, you should contact us as soon as possible. We will provide you with information about your entitlements as a Victorian energy customer.

10.4 Late payment fees

If you have not paid a bill by the *pay-by date*, we may require you to pay a late payment fee, which is part of our standing offer prices published on our website.

11. METERS

- (a) You must allow safe and unhindered access to your premises for the purposes of reading and maintaining the *meters* (where relevant).
- (b) We will use our best endeavours to ensure that a *meter* reading is carried out as frequently as is needed to prepare your bills, consistently with the *metering rules* and in any event at least once every 12 months.

12. UNDERCHARGING AND OVERCHARGING

12.1 Undercharging

- (a) If we have undercharged you, we may recover the undercharged amount from you. If we recover an undercharged amount from you:
 - (i) we will not charge interest on the undercharged amount; and
 - (ii) we will offer you time to pay the undercharged amount in instalments over the same period of time during which you were undercharged (if less than 12 months), or otherwise over 12 months.
- (b) The maximum amount we can recover from you is limited to the amount that has been undercharged in the 4 months immediately before we notify you, unless the undercharge is your fault, or results from your unlawful act or omission.

12.2 Overcharging

- (a) Where you have been overcharged by less than \$50, and you have already paid the overcharged amount, we must credit that amount to your next bill.
- (b) Where you have been overcharged by \$50 or more, we must inform you within 10 *business days* of our becoming aware of the overcharge and, if you have already paid that amount, we must credit that amount to your next bill. However, if you request otherwise, we will comply with that request.
- (c) If you have stopped buying energy from us, we will use our best endeavours to pay the overcharged amount to you within 10 *business days*.
- (d) If you have been overcharged as a result of your own fault or unlawful act or omission, we may limit the amount we credit or pay you to the amount you were overcharged in the last 12 months.

12.3 Reviewing your bill

- (a) If you disagree with the amount you have been charged, you can ask us to review your bill in accordance with our standard complaints and dispute resolution procedures.
- (b) If you ask us to, we must arrange for a check of the meter reading or *metering data* or for a test of the *meter* in reviewing the bill.
- (c) If your bill is being reviewed, you are still required to pay any other bills from us that are due for payment and the lesser of:
 - (i) the portion of the bill that you do not dispute; or
 - (ii) an amount equal to the average of your bills in the last 12 months.

13. SECURITY DEPOSITS

13.1 Security deposit

We may require that you provide a *security deposit*. The circumstances in which we can require a security deposit and the maximum amount of the *security deposit* are governed by the Energy Retail Code.

13.2 Interest on security deposits

Where you have paid a *security deposit*, we must pay you interest on the *security deposit* at a rate and on terms required by the Energy Retail Code.

13.3 Use of a security deposit

- (a) We may use your *security deposit*, and any interest earned on the *security deposit*, to offset any amount you owe under this contract:
 - (i) if you fail to pay a bill and as a result we arrange for the disconnection of your premises; or
 - (ii) in relation to a final bill (i.e. a bill we issue when you vacate the premises or when you stop purchasing energy from us at your premises or when you request that your premises be disconnected).
- (b) If we use your security deposit or any accrued interest to offset amounts owed to us, we will advise you within 10 *business days*.

13.4 Return of security deposit

- (a) We must return your *security deposit* and any accrued interest in the following circumstances:
 - (i) you complete 1 year's payment (in the case of residential customers) or 2 years' payment (in the case of business customers) by the *pay-by dates* on our initial bills; or
 - (ii) subject to clause 14.3 of this contract, you stop purchasing energy at the relevant premises under this contract.
- (b) If you do not give us any reasonable instructions, we will credit the amount of the *security deposit*, together with any accrued interest, to your next bill.

14. DISCONNECTION OF SUPPLY

14.1 When can we arrange for disconnection?

Subject to us satisfying the requirements in the Energy Retail Code, we may arrange for the disconnection of your premises if:

- (a) you do not pay your bill by the *pay-by date* and, if you are a *residential customer* receiving assistance under Part 3 of the Energy Retail Code, you fail to make a payment or otherwise do not adhere to the terms of that assistance; or
- (b) you do not provide a *security deposit* we are entitled to require from you; or
- (c) you do not give access to your premises to read a *meter* (where relevant) for three consecutive *meter* reads; or
- (d) there has been illegal or fraudulent use of energy at your premises in breach of clause 16 of this contract; or
- (e) we are otherwise entitled or required to do so under the Energy Retail Code or by law.

14.2 Notice and warning of disconnection

Before disconnecting your premises, we must comply with relevant warning notice requirements and other provisions in the Energy Retail Code. However, we are not required to provide a warning notice prior to disconnection in certain circumstances (for example, where there has been illegal or fraudulent use of energy at your premises or where there is an emergency or health and safety issue).

14.3 When we must not arrange disconnection

- (a) Subject to paragraph (b), your premises may not be disconnected during the following times ('the protected period'):
 - (i) on a *business day* before 8.00 am or after 2.00 pm for a residential customer; or
 - (ii) on a business day before 8.00 am or after 3.00 pm for a business customer; or
 - (iii) on a Friday or the day before a public holiday; or
 - (iv) on a weekend or a public holiday; or
 - (v) on the days between 20 December and 31 December (both inclusive) in any year; or
- (b) Your premises may be disconnected within the protected period:
 - (i) for reasons of health and safety; or
 - (ii) in an emergency; or
 - (iii) as directed by a *relevant authority*; or
 - (iv) it is permitted to do so under the applicable energy laws; or
 - (v) if you request us to arrange disconnection within the protected period; or
 - (vi) if your premises contain a commercial business that only operates within the protected period and where access to the premises is necessary to effect disconnection; or
 - (vii) where the premises are not occupied.

15. RECONNECTION AFTER DISCONNECTION

- (a) We must request your distributor to reconnect your premises if, within 10 *business days* of your premises being disconnected:
 - (i) you ask us to arrange for reconnection of your premises; and
 - (ii) you rectify the matter that led to the disconnection; and
 - (iii) you pay any reconnection charge (if requested).
- (b) We may terminate this contract 10 *business days* following disconnection if you do not meet the requirements in paragraph (a).

16. WRONGFUL AND ILLEGAL USE OF ENERGY

16.1 Use of energy

You must not, and must take reasonable steps to ensure others do not:

- (a) illegally use energy supplied to your premises; or
- (b) interfere or allow interference with any energy equipment that is at your premises except as may be permitted by law; or
- (c) use the energy supplied to your premises or any energy equipment in a manner that:
 - (i) unreasonably interferes with the connection or supply of energy to another customer; or
 - (ii) causes damage or interference to any third party; or
- (d) allow energy purchased from us to be used otherwise than in accordance with this contract and the Energy Retail Code; or
- (e) tamper with, or permit tampering with, any *meters* or associated equipment.

17. NOTICES AND BILLS

- (a) Notices and bills under this contract must be sent in writing, unless this contract or the Energy Retail Code says otherwise.
- (b) A notice or bill sent under this contract is taken to have been received by you or by us (as relevant):
 - (i) on the date it is handed to the party, left at the party's premises (in your case) or one of our offices (in our case) or successfully faxed to the party (which occurs when the sender receives a transmission report to that effect); or
 - (ii) on the date 2 *business days* after it is posted; or
 - (iii) on the date of transmission (unless the sender receives notice that delivery did not occur or has been delayed) if sent electronically and the use of electronic communication has been agreed between us.
- (c) Our contact details for you to contact us or send us a notice are as set out in our bill to you, or as notified to you from time to time.

18. PRIVACY ACT NOTICE

We will comply with all relevant privacy legislation in relation to your personal information. You can find a summary of our privacy policy on our website. If you have any questions, you can contact our privacy officer.

19. COMPLAINTS AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

19.1 Complaints

If you have a complaint relating to the sale of energy by us to you, or this contract generally, you may lodge a complaint with us in accordance with our standard complaints and dispute resolution procedures.

Note: Our standard complaints and dispute resolution procedures are published on our website.

19.2 Our obligations in handling complaints

If you make a complaint, we must respond to your complaint within the required timeframes set out in our standard complaints and dispute resolution procedures and inform you:

- (a) of the outcome of your complaint and the reasons for our decision; and
- (b) that if you are not satisfied with our response, you have a right to refer the complaint to the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (www.ewov.com.au).

20. FORCE MAJEURE

20.1 Effect of force majeure event

If either party to this contract cannot meet an obligation under this contract because of an event outside the control of that party ('a force majeure event'):

- (a) the obligation, other than an obligation to pay money, is suspended to the extent it is affected by the force majeure event for as long as the force majeure event continues; and
- (b) the affected party must use its best endeavours to give the other party prompt notice of that fact including full particulars of the event, an estimate of its likely duration, the extent to which the affected party's obligations are affected and the steps being taken to remove, overcome or minimise those effects.

20.2 Deemed prompt notice

If the effects of a force majeure event are widespread, we will be deemed to have given you prompt notice if we make the necessary information available by way of a 24-hour telephone service within 30 minutes of being advised of the event or otherwise as soon as practicable.

20.3 Obligation to overcome or minimise effect of force majeure event

A party that claims a force majeure event must use its best endeavours to remove, overcome or minimise the effects of that event as soon as practicable.

20.4 Settlement of industrial disputes

Nothing in this clause requires a party to settle an industrial dispute that constitutes a force majeure event in any manner other than the manner preferred by that party.

21. APPLICABLE LAW

The laws of Victoria govern this contract.

22. RETAILER OF LAST RESORT EVENT

If we are no longer entitled by law to sell energy to you due to a Retailer of Last Resort (RoLR) event occurring in relation to us, we are required under the Energy Retail Code to provide relevant information (including your name, billing address and *metering* identifier) to the entity appointed as the relevant designated retailer for the RoLR event and this contract will come to an end.

23. GENERAL

23.1 Our obligations

Some obligations placed on us under this contract may be carried out by another person. If an obligation is placed on us to do something under this contract, then:

- (a) we are taken to have complied with the obligation if another person does it on our behalf; and
- (b) if the obligation is not complied with, we are still liable to you for the failure to comply with this contract.

23.2 Amending this contract

- (a) This contract may only be amended in accordance with the procedures set out in section 48 of the *Gas Industry Act 2001*.
- (b) We must publish any amendments to this contract on our website.

SIMPLIFIED EXPLANATION OF TERMS

billing cycle means the regular recurrent period for which you receive a bill from us;

business day means a day other than a Saturday, a Sunday or a public holiday;

customer means a person who buys or wants to buy energy from a retailer;

designated retailer means the financially responsible retailer for the premises (where you have an existing connection) or the local area retailer (where you do not have an existing connection) for your premises;

disconnection means an action to prevent the flow of energy to the premises, but does not include an *interruption*;

distributor means the person who operates the system that connects your premises to the distribution network;

distribution planned interruption means an *interruption* of supply planned in advance by a *distributor*, including for planned maintenance, repair or augmentation of the distribution system; or for installation of a new supply to another customer;

emergency means an emergency due to the actual or imminent occurrence of an event that in any way endangers or threatens to endanger the safety or health of any person, or normal operation of the distribution system or transmission system, or that destroys or damages, or threatens to destroy or damage, any property;

energy means gas;

energy laws means national and State and Territory laws and rules relating to energy and the legal instruments made under those laws and rules;

Energy Retail Code means the Energy Retail Code Version 11 dated 13 October 2014 produced by the Essential Services Commission Victoria and as amended from time to time.

force majeure event means an event outside the control of a party;

Gas Industry Act means the *Gas Industry Act 2001*.

gas full commencement date means 1 July 2020.

gas retailer means a person who holds a retail licence under the *Gas Industry Act*;

GST has the meaning given in the GST Act (*A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999* (Cth));

medical confirmation means certification in a *medical confirmation form* from a registered medical practitioner that a person residing or intending to reside at a customer's premises requires *life support equipment*;

medical confirmation form means a written form issued by a *retailer* to enable the customer to provide *medical confirmation* to the *retailer*;

National Energy Retail Law means the Law of that name that is applied by each participating State and Territory;

relevant authority means any person or body who has the power under law to direct us, including the Australian Energy Market Operator and State or Federal Police;

residential customer means a person who purchases energy principally for personal, household or domestic use at their premises;

retailer means a person that is authorised to sell energy to customers;

RoLR event means an event that triggers the operation of the Retailer of Last Resort scheme under the *Gas Industry Act 2001*.

Rules means the National Energy Retail Rules made under the National Energy Retail Law;

security deposit means an amount of money paid to us as security against non-payment of a bill in accordance with the Energy Retail Code;

small customer means a 'domestic or small business customer' as defined in the *Gas Industry Act 2001*.

standing offer prices means tariffs and charges that we charge you for or in connection with the sale and supply of energy. These are published on our website.