The Electricity Distribution Code of Practice requires Victorian distributors (the **distributors**) to make guaranteed service level (**GSL**) payments to customers who receive a level of service worse than a specific threshold or level. GSL payments are an acknowledgement of the inconvenience a customer experiences when their distributor does not meet a GSL.

Our frequently asked questions provide information about the GSL scheme, and the steps you can take if you are eligible for a payment but have not received it.

**1. What are guaranteed service level payments?**

A guaranteed service level payment is money an electricity distributor pays to their customers, to recognise the inconvenience a customer experiences from long or frequent power outages, or poor service.

The Electricity Distribution Code of Practice specifies the minimum service level that distributors must provide to customers. These include:

* appointments that distributors make with you to provide services
* delay or failure to connect a new supply of electricity
* delayed supply restoration
* low energy supply reliability
* major event days like storms and severe weather.

You may be entitled to a GSL payment if your distributor is unable to meet these minimum service levels. In some circumstances, you may be entitled to multiple payments but only one in each category.

You may not be entitled to a payment if an outage is the result of an event outside your electricity distributor’s control.

**2. Am I eligible for payment?**

* You may be eligible for a GSL payment if your annual electricity consumption is 160 MWh or less and your distributor has not provided the relevant level of guaranteed service.

**If eligible, how much am I entitled to be paid?**

Payments range from $35 to $380 depending on the circumstances. For example, different amounts will be payable depending on whether the poor service related to your distributor being late for an appointment, the number and the type of outages at your premises, or how long a delay to provide a new electricity connection is.

Our [website](https://www.esc.vic.gov.au/electricity-and-gas/information-consumers/customer-payments-energy-outages) summarises the circumstances in which distributors must make GSL payments and the amount of those payments.

**What can I do if I did not receive a GSL payment I think I am entitled to?**

If you believe a GSL payment is overdue, incorrect, or you have a complaint in relation to the GSL scheme, first contact your distributor.

Your electricity bill should include the name and telephone number of your electricity distributor. Alternatively, you can search the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action’s website, using their find your energy distributor page. Sometimes, the distributor may refer you to your retailer if the distributor has already passed on the GSL payment.

If you are unable to resolve the issue through your distributor or retailer, contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) (EWOV), which is an independent service that investigates and resolves complaints in Victoria’s electricity, gas, and water sectors.

EWOV services are free to all Victorian customers. For further information on EWOV’s services, including how to lodge a complaint, visit their website.

**How is a GSL payment made?**

Guaranteed service level payments are made automatically. Your distributor passes them to your retailer within 60 business days of the end of the quarter in which you are eligible for payment. Retailers then apply the payment as a credit to your electricity bill.

**What can I do if the GSL payment does not cover my losses from the outage?**

Guaranteed service level payments are not intended to be compensation for the loss an outage causes. They acknowledge the inconvenience a customer experiences when essential services are disrupted.

You may be able to lodge a compensation claim for damaged property or food spoilage resulting from an unplanned power outage or power surge. Claims for compensation are generally made through the distributors’ websites:

• [AusNet Services](https://www.ausnetservices.com.au/outages/claims)

• [CitiPower and Powercor](https://www.powercor.com.au/contact-us/claims/)

• [Jemena](https://jemena.com.au/electricity/your-rights-and-obligations/make-a-claim)

• [United Energy](https://www.unitedenergy.com.au/help-support/complaints-claims/submit-a-claim/).

**How do I get help if I do not receive a GSL payment?**

If you think you are eligible for a GSL payment and have not received it, talk to your distributor or retailer first. If you areunable to resolve the issue with your distributor or retailer, the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) can assist you to resolve the dispute.

**Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria)**

Phone: 1800 500 509

Email: [ewovinfo@ewov.com.au](mailto:ewovinfo@ewov.com.au)

Website and online complaint form: [www.ewov.com.au](http://www.ewov.com.au)

**Important notice**

The information in this publication is to provide general guidance only. It does not constitute legal or other professional advice and should not be relied on as a statement of the law in any jurisdiction. While the commission has made every reasonable effort to provide current and accurate information, you should obtain professional advice if you have any specific concern, before relying on the accuracy, currency or completeness of this information.

**\***This fact sheet reflects the relevant information as at **30 June 2023**.