

Review of life support protections in Victoria – Draft decision

Factsheet



Overview

The Essential Services Commission (commission) is reviewing Victoria's energy rules to improve protections for customers who use life support equipment.

These proposed changes aim to improve customer protections during power outages and the accuracy of life support registers.

The review aligns with proposed changes in other states and territories, which is being considered by the Australian Energy Market Commission.

Why are life support protections being reviewed?

Victoria is facing more frequent extreme weather events, which can lead to major power outages.

The Victorian government held several reviews into recent major power outages. These found that inaccurate life support registers make it difficult for emergency services to find and prioritise help for medically vulnerable customers.

The current rules led to outdated customer registrations, and do not identify customers with life threatening needs.

How can you provide your feedback?

Visit [Engage Victoria](#) to provide a written submission by **16 April 2026** to help inform our final decision.

See the commission's website for more information about our review of [life support protections in Victoria](#).

Please contact energyreform@esc.vic.gov.au if you have any questions or would like to arrange a meeting.





What are the proposed changes?



New 'life-threatening' system flag

Medical confirmation forms will flag customers at higher risk during prolonged outages. Emergency services can use this data to prioritise help during major outages. All life support customers will receive the same level of support, under the current rules.



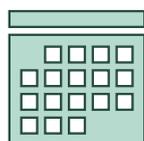
Retailer responsibility for life support register

Retailers will be solely responsible for updating life support registers. This includes registration, follow up, information changes and deregistration. Distributors must redirect customers to retailers and notify retailers if contacted directly. Retailers must deregister life support customers when equipment is no longer required or when requested.



Updated medical confirmation process

We will develop a standard medical confirmation form (which could be used across different states and territories). The form will capture equipment type, 'life-threatening' status and contact details. Existing confirmed customers do not need to resubmit a medical confirmation form, unless they want to be identified as having a life-threatening condition (only medical can practitioners can make this assessment).



Yearly check-ins

Each year, retailers must contact life support customers to check that their information is still up to date. If a customer has not provided a medical confirmation form following the check-in, retailers must start existing processes to deregister the customer. This includes further notices reminding the customer to submit a form.



Improved communication methods

Retailers must collect and use customers' preferred communication method (email, SMS, post) for all mandatory notices. Customers can nominate a secondary contact, who would also receive relevant information.





When will these changes take place?

- **1 July 2026 – 31 December 2026:** retailers will have six months to complete a first check-in with life support customers who have been registered for more than 12 months.
- **1 January 2027 – 31 December 2027:** retailers will have twelve months to complete the first regular check-in.
- **1 December 2027:** all other obligations come into effect.

What does the reform mean for customers?

The proposed life support reforms introduce different requirements and protections for customers on the life support register.

Customers with medical confirmation

Customers do not need to submit a new medical confirmation form to remain on the life support register.

Retailers will conduct a yearly check-in which involves:

- ✓ Confirm they still require life support
- ✓ Update their contact and secondary contact details
- ✓ Check if their health condition has changed

If a customer's condition has changed:

Customers will be asked to provide a new medical confirmation form, to update equipment details or to flag that their condition is life-threatening.

If the customer **does not** update their medical form:

Customers will still have the same level of protections they currently receive. However, emergency services will not be aware that the customer has a life-threatening condition.

Customers without medical confirmation

Customers will be reminded to send a medical confirmation form to their retailer.

Retailers will conduct a yearly check-in

If a customer **does** provide medical confirmation, a retailer will:

- ✓ Confirm they still require life support
- ✓ Update their contact and secondary contact details
- ✓ Check if their health condition has changed

If customer **does not** provide medical confirmation:

Customers may be removed from the register. Retailers must record reasons for not deregistering a customer without medical confirmation.

Retailers must deregister a customer, if it becomes aware that the customer no longer needs life support equipment.

