

More timely enforcement action aim of regulator's review

The state's Essential Services Commission is aiming to speed up how long it takes to call energy companies to account when they breach the energy rules.

The commission is looking to streamline how it handles potential breaches of the [Energy Retail Code](#) which covers things like customer contracts, billing disputes, payment difficulties and the contents of bills.

The state's energy regulator is reviewing its [compliance and enforcement](#) policy with public consultation on the proposed changes over the next few weeks.

The commission's energy director Sarah McDowell says the proposed changes will focus on issues that have the greatest impact on customers, as well as increasing scrutiny of energy companies who have broken the rules.

"We are looking to streamline our internal process so compliance and enforcement action can be undertaken in a more timely manner where needed.

"The proposed update also clearly signals our intention to take action against companies who are not complying with [customer protection legislation](#) strengthened in recent years by the Victorian Government," she said.

The policy outlines the commission's approach to taking action on breaches of the energy rules which range from writing warning letters for minor breaches and administrative and enforceable undertakings to imposing penalty notices, court orders, injunctions and prosecution.

Last year, the commission took action against a number of energy companies with penalties ranging from \$20,000 to \$300,000 for issues like failing to obtain explicit informed consent before switching a customer to wrongful disconnections.

The commission [monitors and reports](#) on compliance with the energy rules, and takes action on breaches as part of its administration of energy industry legislation.

Interested stakeholders can send a submission on the proposed policy changes to compliance.reporting@esc.vic.gov.au 8 February 2019.

For further information call:

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