

Strengthening protections for Victorians on life support

Victorian energy consumers on life support will be better protected under changes proposed by the Essential Services Commission.

The state's energy regulator has released a [draft decision](#) that seeks to establish better processes for the way life support customers are registered as well as better communication between energy businesses.

Proposed changes include making it easier to be identified and therefore protected as a life support customer without first having to provide a medical certificate.

Commission energy director Sarah McDowell says audits of energy businesses had showed there was a risk of life support customers not being properly identified when planned outages occurred because of the requirement to first obtain medical confirmation.

“Our audits identified the need for energy businesses to have better information sharing and documentation about vulnerable customers to ensure they are appropriately notified ahead of planned outages.

“Victorians on life support in particular need advance notice of planned outages so they can arrange to stay elsewhere or organise an alternate power source such as a generator,” she said.

The proposed changes to the energy retail and distribution codes are in line with similar recent amendments to energy retail rules applying in the other states.

Other suggested amendments to life support protections in the draft decision include:

- life support protections being afforded to customers from the time they notify their energy business that they are a life support customer until they are validly de-registered
- clarify responsibilities between customers and energy businesses in situations where life support equipment is fuelled by both electricity and gas

The draft decision is open for consultation until 13 September 2019 via [Engage Victoria](#).

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