

Freedom Lifestyle Parks

Family Violence Support Policy

This document outlines the family violence policy for Freedom Lifestyle Parks' residential and small business energy consumers. It details how we safeguard your energy account data, provide assistance for bill payments, and support you if you are facing family violence. This operates alongside your existing rights under state or territory laws, such as tenancy legislation.

Emergency Assistance

If you are at immediate risk of harm, please dial emergency services on 000.

Understanding Family Violence

We recognise family violence as any situation where an individual in an intimate, domestic, family, or family-like relationship utilises violence, makes threats, exercises control and coercion, or deliberately compromises your sense of safety.

Family violence can manifest in many forms, including but not limited to:

- **Financial abuse:** Restricting your access to money, removing your financial autonomy, or denying living expenses for you or your dependents.
- **Emotional or psychological abuse:** Intimidation, manipulation, or actions designed to control or undermine your confidence.
- **Physical abuse:** The deliberate use of physical force against you, an animal, or another individual.
- **Sexual abuse:** Any sexual acts that are exploitative, unwanted, or forced upon you.
- **Social abuse:** Deliberately cutting you off from your culture, friends, or family.
- **Elder abuse:** Actions, or failures to act (including threats), that cause distress or harm to an older person, typically involving a power imbalance or a breach of trust.

How We Will Support You

If you disclose that you are experiencing family violence, we will immediately implement strict precautions regarding your energy information.

- **Discreet Communication:** We will only discuss your energy bills or contract with you directly, or with an individual you have explicitly nominated.
- **No Proof Required:** We will never demand evidence of your situation before providing you with assistance.
- **No Repeated Explanations:** You will never be forced to recount your personal situation multiple times.

Communicating on Your Terms

- We will ask how you wish to be contacted and use only that specific method for all matters regarding your energy account.
- If your preferred method is unavailable, we will work with you to find alternative, safe communication options.

Nominating a Support Person

- You have the option to designate a support person to handle communications with us on your behalf.
- This representative could be a friend, family member, social worker, financial counsellor, or anyone assisting you with your energy bills.
- To enable this, you must provide your written consent along with their contact details, which we will log in our system.
- Once established, we will follow your exact directions, which can include communicating exclusively with your chosen support person.

Protecting Your Privacy and Information

If you inform us that you are affected by family violence, we will secure your contact details and energy account data through the following measures:

- **Physical Security:** Any paper records concerning your account will be locked in a secure cabinet, accessible only to specific employees or agents who strictly need them

for your account services.

- **Digital Security:** Your digital records will be secured with passwords in our computer system and similarly restricted to authorised personnel only.
- **Account Flagging:** With your consent, we will place a 'flag' on your account. This alerts the park operators managing your file to take additional safety precautions and ensures they only use your approved communication channels or contact your support person.
- **Strict Confidentiality:** Your energy data will never be shared with anyone without your explicit permission, except in circumstances where we are legally mandated to do so.

Financial Abuse and Payment Difficulties

Family violence frequently involves financial abuse, which can make managing bills incredibly difficult. Financial abuse includes preventing your access to funds, manipulating your financial choices, or utilising your assets without your consent.

Energy accounts can unfortunately be exploited as tools for financial abuse. Examples include:

- Setting up an energy account in your name secretly.
- Opening a joint energy account with you but refusing to pay their share of the costs.
- Leveraging your account details to manipulate or control you.

We acknowledge that family violence is a leading cause of payment struggles. If you are facing financial hardship due to family violence, we will fully factor this into the support we provide for your energy bills.

Assistance with Your Bills

Please reach out to us promptly if family violence is making it hard to pay your energy bills.

We can provide a range of support options:

- **Fee Waivers:** We will completely remove any late payment penalties from your energy bill.
- **Flexible Payment Plans:** If you are a residential consumer on an existing payment plan and miss payments, we will collaborate with you to establish a fresh plan.
- **Hardship Support:** Residential customers facing financial difficulties will be informed about the comprehensive support options available under our Hardship policy, which you can request a copy of at any time.
- **Protection from Disconnection:** We will evaluate how family violence affects your ability to pay and guarantee your energy supply is not cut off if your unpaid bills are a result of this violence, or if a disconnection would threaten your safety.

External Support Services & Referrals

If you are affected by family violence, the following independent organisations can offer expert assistance.

<i>Service</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact Details</i>
National 1800 RESPECT Line (24 hours)	Free advice and counselling for both people experiencing family violence and professionals responding to family violence.	Call: 1800 737 732 Text: 0458 737 732 http://www.1800respect.org.au/
Lifeline (24 hours)	Crisis support and suicide prevention services.	Call: 13 11 14 http://www.lifeline.org.au/
Kids Helpline (24 hours)	Free, confidential counselling for children and young people aged 5 to 25.	Call: 1800 55 1800 http://www.kidshelpline.com.au/
13 YARN (24 hours)	Service for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in crisis. Offers a confidential yarning opportunity with a trained supporter.	Call: 13 92 76 https://www.13yarn.org.au/
QLife	Free support and referral for LGBTIQ+ Australians wanting support around gender, sexuality and	Call: 1800 184 527 https://qlife.org.au/

<i>Service</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Contact Details</i>
	relationships.	
Men's Referral Service	An anonymous and confidential telephone counselling service to help men involved in family and domestic violence matters.	Call: 1300 766 491 http://www.ntv.org.au/get-help/
Elder Abuse Helpline	A trained operator will talk to you about your concerns and provide referrals to the relevant support services.	Call: 1300 651 192 (QLD) Call: 07 3867 2525 (rest of AUS)
National Debt Helpline	Free advice on how to manage debt, coordinated by Financial Counselling Australia.	Call: 1800 007 007 https://ndh.org.au/

Ombudsman Schemes

Energy ombudsman schemes can help resolve a complaint about your electricity and gas seller. Their services are free and available if you are a residential customer (i.e. not a business customer).

If you have a complaint that you cannot resolve with your energy seller, you should contact the ombudsman scheme in your state.

<i>State</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Contact Details</i>
ACT	ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal	02 6207 1740 http://www.acat.act.gov.au/
NSW	Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW	1800 246 545 http://www.ewon.com.au/
QLD	Energy and Water Ombudsman QLD	1800 662 837 http://www.ewoq.com.au/
SA	Energy and Water Ombudsman South Australia	1800 665 565 http://www.ewosa.com.au/