

# UTILITY TERMINATION



Long Beach Community Office  
Eviction Defense Center  
601 Pacific Avenue  
Long Beach, CA 90802  
(562) 435-3501  
[www.lafla.org](http://www.lafla.org)  
Rev. 11/2009 (TDW)



## What to do if your utilities have been shut off:

- If you have a rental agreement with your landlord, check to see if you are responsible for paying the utility that has been shut off.
- **If you are responsible to pay for your own utilities**, call the utility company (i.e. DWP, Southern California Edison, City of Long Beach) to make sure the bill has been paid. It is your responsibility to pay for the utilities, not your landlord.
- **If your landlord is responsible for paying for your utilities**, contact the utility company and ask them why the utility was turned off. If the utility company says that the landlord has not paid the bill then:
  - Ask the utility company if you can have the utilities turned back on in your name without you paying the outstanding bill. Sometimes the utility company will require you to pay a deposit before they will set up the account in your name. If you live in a building with a master meter (there is only one meter for the entire apartment building), you will have to work out the details with your neighbors to ensure that the deposit and the monthly bills are split fairly.
  - File a Complaint
    - If you live in the city of Los Angeles (this includes San Pedro, Wilmington, and Harbor City), file a complaint with the Los Angeles Housing Department. Tell them that the utilities have been turned off because the landlord failed to pay the bill, and that you want the property to be put in the REAP program. The contact number for the Los Angeles Housing Department is (866) 557-RENT (7368).
    - If you live outside of the city of Los Angeles, file a complaint with the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs. They will be able to instruct you on how to call the police, report your landlord to the proper authorities, or help you make your case in Small Claims Court. The contact number for the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs is (800) 593-8222.
    - Check the Government section of the white pages in your city for a local housing agency that you may also be able to file a complaint with.

- If your landlord is responsible for paying for your utilities, and the utility company says that the bill is paid in full, this means that your landlord may have intentionally turned off the utility to your rental unit.
  - File a Complaint:
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    - If you live outside of the city of Los Angeles, file a complaint with the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs. They will be able to instruct you on how to call the police, report your landlord to the proper authorities, or help you make your case in Small Claims Court. The contact number for the Los Angeles County Department of Consumer Affairs is (800) 593-8222.
    - Check the Government section of the white pages in your city for a local housing agency that you may also be able to file a complaint with.
  - You may also file a Small Claims lawsuit against your landlord for intentionally terminating the utility. It is a violation of California Civil Code section 789.3 for a landlord to interrupt his tenants utility services of his/her tenants. You may ask the court for damages in the amount of \$100 per day for each day that your utilities are off.