



# Family Violence Policy

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If you require a large print copy of this policy, please contact us on **13 13 53**.

## Acknowledgement of Country

Synergy acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Land on which we operate and their continuing connection to the land, water and community. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, their cultures and to Elders past, present and emerging.

## Reducing the impact

If you're in a family relationship that makes you feel unsafe, fearful, or powerless then you may be experiencing or recovering from family violence.

Forms of family violence include emotional, verbal, social, economic, psychological, physical, and sexual abuse. Family violence also includes threatening, coercive or other behaviour that controls and dominates one family member and makes them feel fear for their own safety or wellbeing, or that of others.

Synergy recognises that family violence is a widespread social issue that does not discriminate and often remains hidden and underreported. We understand that family violence is never the responsibility of the person experiencing it, and that the responsibility rests solely with the person perpetrating the violence.

We have zero tolerance for family violence and will do everything we can to support our customers who are affected.

Synergy also recognises that those experiencing family violence may also be experiencing payment difficulty and hardship. Our Financial Hardship Policy outlines the assistance available to customers experiencing payment difficulties. It can be found at [synergy.net.au/hardship](https://www.synergy.net.au/hardship) or a hard copy can be sent to you.

## We're here to help

Synergy is committed to helping customers affected by family violence. If you are experiencing or recovering from family violence, it is important that you call us on **1800 637 985**.

We will treat you with respect, empathy and compassion and we will ensure any details you share with us remain confidential, to the extent permitted by law.

To help us understand how we can assist you, we will ask you some personal questions that may include details about your family and financial circumstances.

### Our commitment to you

The information you provide will help us to work with you to find the best way to help. We know it can be hard to speak to us about difficult circumstances, so be assured that we will:

- **Protect your information and ensure it remains confidential, to the extent permitted by law.** We will do this by attaching a verbal password of your choice to your account to ensure only authorised access is granted.

We can also make sure bills or reminders relating to a previous account address are not sent to that address, and are sent to another address of your choice. We can create a new contract that has no connection to your previous address or previous account (at no charge).

- **Work with you to determine the safest method for us to communicate with you.** If your preferred method of communication is not reasonably possible, we will offer you an alternative.

We will keep a record of your preferred method of communication, and we will only communicate with you by that method.

- **Record your information safely.** We will not require you to repeat details about your situation each time you, or another person acting on your behalf, contacts us.

To ensure this outcome, our processes include account segregation, password protection and flagging, and staff training regarding this requirement.

- **Provide clarity.** We will advise you of the consequences of being named on a Synergy account of a residential customer who is not experiencing family violence.

If you are listed as an authorised contact on an account, the account holder has the authority to request information which may include any of your details recorded on the account, and to remove you as an authorised contact removing all protections.

- **Consider reducing or waiving any fees, charges or debts.** We will also consider the potential impact of debt collection on you and investigate the extent to which another person may have contributed to any outstanding debt at your supply address.

- **Consider your circumstances.** We will consider your particular circumstances before taking disconnection action for failure to pay a bill.

We will ensure that your supply address is not disconnected for a period of 9 months from the date you advise us of your situation, unless;

- You inform us, or we become aware that you no longer reside at that supply address; or
- You request disconnection; or
- There are safety reasons warranting disconnection; or
- There is an emergency warranting disconnection; or
- Electricity has been illegally consumed at your supply address; or
- You are a pre-payment meter customer.

#### **Assistance for pre-payment meter customers**

If you are a pre-payment meter customer and we become aware that you are experiencing family violence, we will also provide you with advice about:

- Different types of meters available to you.
- Advantages and disadvantages that may be associated with each type of meter available to you.
- Any relevant processes for requesting a different meter.
- Financial assistance that may be available to you.
- Arrangements we have in place to assist you in avoiding disconnection.

We will also confirm with you that there are no charges associated with replacing a pre-payment meter with a standard meter.

#### **Our team**

Synergy has a dedicated team to support and assist our customers who are experiencing or recovering from family violence.

We have developed comprehensive and specialised family violence training in consultation with expert community organisations who represent people in our community who may be experiencing or recovering from family violence.

This training ensures our customer support representatives can identify customers who may be affected by family violence. It also equips them with a thorough understanding of how to apply this policy effectively and appropriately to provide confidential assistance to our customers experiencing or recovering from family violence.

# What you need to do

If you are experiencing or recovering from the impacts of family violence, we're here to help you.

Call us on **1800 637 985** to speak with somebody that can help you with your Synergy account.

If you're at immediate risk, call emergency services on **000**.

## Frequently asked questions

### **How do I let Synergy know that I am experiencing or recovering from family domestic violence?**

If you're experiencing or recovering from family domestic violence, please let our dedicated support team know by calling on **1800 637 985**.

### **How does Synergy keep my information safe?**

We will protect your information and ensure it remains safe and confidential, to the extent permitted by law.

We do this by attaching a verbal password of your choice to your account to ensure only authorised access is granted. We can also stop bills or reminders relating to a previous account address from being sent to that address, and ensure they are instead sent to another address of your choice.

For your protection we can create a new contract that has no connection to your previous address or previous account (at no charge).

### **Is the personal information I share with Synergy confidential?**

Any private information about your circumstances that you share with us is safe and private. Synergy handles your personal information in accordance with our Privacy Policy, which can be found at **[synergy.net.au/privacy](https://www.synergy.net.au/privacy)**.

### **I have a concession card.**

#### **What rebates can I receive and how can I apply?**

A range of rebates are provided by the WA State government to help with the cost of electricity bills. See page 10 for more information.

# Community support services

If it's not an emergency and you need support, the organisations listed below can help you, or anyone you know, experiencing or recovering from family violence.

These contact details are accurate at the time of publication of this brochure. If you have difficulty contacting one organisation, please try another on this list.

## **1800RESPECT National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service**

This is the national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service.

Website: [1800respect.org.au](http://1800respect.org.au)

Phone: **1800 737 732**

## **Women's Domestic Violence Helpline**

This 24-hour helpline provides support for women, with or without children, who are experiencing family and domestic violence in Western Australia (including referrals to women's refuges).

Website: [synergy.net.au/whelpline](http://synergy.net.au/whelpline)

Phone: **1800 007 339**

## **Djinda Service**

This service provides advocacy and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in the Perth metropolitan area who have experienced family violence or sexual assault.

Website: [relationships.wa.org.au/djinda](http://relationships.wa.org.au/djinda)

Phone: **(08) 6164 0650**

## **Crisis Care**

This helpline provides after-hours response to reported concerns for a child's safety and wellbeing, and information and referrals for people experiencing crisis.

Website: [synergy.net.au/crisiscare](http://synergy.net.au/crisiscare)

Phone: **1800 199 008**

## **Men's Domestic Violence Helpline**

This helpline provides telephone information and referrals for men who are concerned about their violent and abusive behaviours, and for male victims of family and domestic violence in Western Australia.

Website: [synergy.net.au/mhelpline](http://synergy.net.au/mhelpline)

Phone: **1800 000 599**

## **MensLine Australia**

This is a 24/7 support service for men and boys dealing with family and relationship difficulties. The service is available from anywhere in Australia and is staffed by professional counsellors, experienced in men's issues.

Website: [mensline.org.au](http://mensline.org.au)

Phone: **1300 78 99 78**

## **Sexual Assault Resource Centre**

This is a free service located in Perth providing crisis services to people who have experienced a recent sexual assault in the last two weeks, and counselling for sexual assault or abuse experienced recently or in the past.

Website: [kemh.health.wa.gov.au/sarc](http://kemh.health.wa.gov.au/sarc)

Phone: **1800 199 888**

## **Aboriginal Family Law Service**

Find legal and support services if you're an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person who has experienced family violence or sexual assault.

Website: [afls.org.au](http://afls.org.au)

Phone: **(08) 9355 1502**

## **National Debt Helpline**

This service provides assistance for those experiencing financial hardship caused by domestic and family violence.

Website: [ndh.org.au/complex-situations](http://ndh.org.au/complex-situations)

Phone: **1800 007 007**

## **Daisy**

Daisy is a free app that connects you to support services in your local area. The app includes safety features to help protect your privacy.

Website: [1800respect.org.au/daisy](http://1800respect.org.au/daisy)

# Concessions and rebates

Rebate	Eligibility
<b>Account Establishment Fee Rebate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Care Card</li> <li>• Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Gold Card (this includes War Widow, Dependent, and those who are Totally and Permanently Incapacitated)</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card</li> </ul>
<b>WA Government Energy Assistance Payment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Care Card</li> <li>• Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Gold Card (this includes War Widow, Dependent, and those who are Totally and Permanently Incapacitated)</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card</li> </ul>
<b>Dependent Child Rebate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have at least 1 dependent child listed on card</li> <li>• Health Care Card</li> <li>• Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Gold Card (this includes War Widow, Dependent, and those who are Totally and Permanently Incapacitated)</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card</li> </ul>
<b>Reduced Meter Test Fee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Care Card</li> <li>• Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Gold Card (this includes War Widow, Dependent, and those who are Totally and Permanently Incapacitated)</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card</li> </ul>

Rebate	Eligibility
<b>Late Payment Fee</b> (fee waived for two notices per year only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Care Card</li> <li>• Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Gold Card (this includes War Widow, Dependent, and those who are Totally and Permanently Incapacitated)</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>• WA Seniors Card or Commonwealth Seniors Health Card</li> </ul>
<b>Air Conditioning Rebate</b> (Available to customers who live in areas north of the 26 <sup>th</sup> Parallel and/or north of the 50 Day Relative Strain index line (defined locations))	<p>In addition to living in a defined location, customers must hold a WA Seniors Card and either a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, Card or</li> <li>• Pensioner Concession Card, or</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card</li> </ul> <p>Customers are also eligible if they live in the defined locations, have dependent children, and hold one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Care Card</li> <li>• Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Gold Card</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card</li> </ul>
<b>Life Support Equipment Energy Subsidy</b> (apply to the Office of State Revenue at <a href="http://finance.wa.gov.au">finance.wa.gov.au</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Care Card (not including the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card)</li> <li>• Health Care Interim Voucher</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>• Pensioner Concession Card</li> </ul>
<b>Thermo-regulatory Dysfunction Energy Subsidy Scheme</b> (apply to the Office of State Revenue at <a href="http://finance.wa.gov.au">finance.wa.gov.au</a> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health Care Card (not including the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card)</li> <li>• Health Care Interim Voucher</li> <li>• Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>• Pensioner Concession Card</li> </ul>

For more details on rebates and concessions, including a list of eligible Air Conditioning Rebate towns, please visit **[synergy.net.au/rebates](https://www.synergy.net.au/rebates)**

To apply for a rebate off your electricity bill, please call us on **13 13 53** and we will take your application over the phone. When you get a new card or if your circumstances change and you no longer hold a valid card, you are obliged to notify us. If you are a My Account customer, you can update your concession online at **[synergy.net.au/myaccount](https://www.synergy.net.au/myaccount)**

To view Synergy's Complaints Resolution Policy visit **[synergy.net.au/complaints](https://www.synergy.net.au/complaints)** or call us on **13 13 53**. If you feel we have been unable to resolve your complaint satisfactorily, you may wish to contact the Energy and Water Ombudsman on **1800 754 004**.





# Our commitment to serve you well

We may supply your energy but what we're really here for is to help you get the most out of it. That means giving you the best possible service. If you have any feedback or ways we can help you better, we'd love to hear them.

Visit us online at [synergy.net.au/contact](https://www.synergy.net.au/contact)

Give us a call:

- **13 13 53** for residential customers.  
Monday to Friday between 7am and 7pm AWST, excluding public holidays.
- **13 13 54** for business customers.  
Monday to Friday between 8am and 5pm AWST, excluding public holidays.
- **+61 8 6212 2222** for calls outside Western Australia.  
Monday to Friday between 7am and 7pm AWST, excluding public holidays.
-  **TTY 13 36 77**  
if you have hearing or speech difficulties.
-  **TIS 13 14 50**  
for telephone interpretation services.

Or you can write to us:

- **Customer Services**  
**Synergy**  
**GPO Box K851**  
**Perth WA 6842**