



NETWORKS

Serving all electricity customers

# VULNERABLE CUSTOMER POLICY

**ESB Networks Code of Practice  
Supporting Vulnerable Customers**



# VULNERABLE CUSTOMER POLICY

ESB Networks has delivered an energy service to the Irish nation for over 85 years and provides a safe reliable service to all customers: domestic, commercial and industrial.

In particular, we are concerned about our customers who are more vulnerable to loss of electricity supply. A 'vulnerable customer' means a household customer who is:

- a. critically dependent on electrically powered equipment, which shall include but is not limited to life protecting devices, assistive technologies to support independent living and medical equipment, or*
- b. particularly vulnerable to disconnection during winter months for reasons of advanced age or physical, sensory, intellectual or mental health.”(S.I. 463, 2011)*

## Registering as a Vulnerable Customer

To register as a Vulnerable Customer please contact your current Electricity Supplier who will notify ESB Networks.

ESB Networks will maintain a register of vulnerable customers based on information from all electricity suppliers. This information is kept secure and private.

# VULNERABLE CUSTOMER CODE OF PRACTICE

## **In this Code of Practice we outline how we support you as a Vulnerable Customer.**

If you are registered with your Electricity Supplier as a vulnerable customer we offer support by providing the following services:

### **Planned service interruption:**

In order to carry out upgrades or repairs to the electricity network, it is sometimes necessary to disconnect part of the network to do this work safely.

- We will contact you at least three days before a planned outage by post or SMS text. This gives you time to make alternative arrangements if you need to, as some planned outages may last for a number of hours.

### **Fault Service Interruption**

While the electricity infrastructure in Ireland is one of the most reliable in the world, faults or damage to the network can result in loss of supply to some customers. ESB Networks has technicians based all around the country who are on standby to deal with any faults that occur.

For customers who are critically reliant on electrical equipment, and who have registered as a vulnerable customer with their Electricity Supplier, ESB Networks will provide the following support:

- If you call our Networks Customer Care Team at 1850 372 999 you will receive priority and will be answered by the next available Customer Service Advisor.

- In extreme fault situations (e.g. Storms), where you have provided a current contact phone number you will receive an SMS text or landline call with relevant information.

Most faults or damage to the electricity networks are repaired quickly. There are times, however, when a longer interruption to supply is beyond our control, for example due to extreme weather.

If you are dependent on life supporting electrical equipment you can prepare for a power outage by:

- Discussing with your District Nurse or HSE representative how your medical equipment works.
- Making sure that your battery back-up is always fully charged.
- Putting a plan in place to move to another location if required.

If there is serious damage to the electricity networks resulting in widespread faults, ESB Networks will provide additional communications specifically to those customers dependant on medical equipment.

# BE SAFE IN THE EVENT OF A POWER CUT

- Never approach broken lines or damaged poles, and keep children and animals away – report damage to ESB Networks at 1850 372 999 and listen to recorded messages carefully.
- Turn off electric cookers, ovens, irons, etc.
- Leave a light switched on so you know when power has been restored.
- Take extra care if using candles, oil lamps or other naked flames.
- Test smoke alarms with fresh batteries.
- Ensure adequate ventilation if using gas heaters.

ESB Networks Powercheck App gives up to date information on power outages and is available on both Android and IOS phones and at [www.esbpowercheck.ie](http://www.esbpowercheck.ie)

You can also look at our video on what to do in the event of a power outage which is available at <http://www.esb.ie/esbnetworksvideos>

## BE WINTER READY

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There is a lot of useful advice for families on the Winter Ready website: [www.winterready.ie](http://www.winterready.ie). The Winter Ready booklet is widely available from public libraries and HSE centres.

For emergencies call 1850 372 999

For general queries call 1850 372 757

Find out more on [esbnetworks.ie](http://esbnetworks.ie)  
For details on power interruptions, visit [esbpowercheck.ie](http://esbpowercheck.ie)  
or download the **PowerCheck App** on **IOS** or **Android Smartphones**.

 [@ESBNetworks](https://twitter.com/ESBNetworks)

**ESB Networks is also a participant in the Department of Defence Protocol for Utility companies and other agencies interacting with the public in an Emergency.**

This means that if ESB Networks personnel come across a person who is vulnerable during an emergency (for example when a crew calls to a house or the person rings our Networks Customer Care Centre) they will **first encourage the person to avail of local support** from family or friends, but if this is not possible ESB Networks will pass on the necessary information to the appropriate authority (usually via the regional coordination centre, which is operated by the regional Principal Response Agencies, the Local Authority, the HSE and An Garda Síochána).

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