

Perpetual Energy Life Support Policy

1.0 Document Information

Internal Use Only

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Background

Life Support is where someone at a residence has a medical condition and relies on continuous supply of electricity or gas to run critical medical equipment to ensure the ongoing health and safety of the person. The Life Support equipment is generally electric, but a doctor may authorise gas appliances also.

2.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for Perpetual Energy employees to appropriately register and categorise life support customers and advise customers an outline of the procedure required to be followed to enable them to receive the life support protections.

This document establishes policies, systems and procedures for registering and deregistering life support customers.

2.3 Scope

This policy applies to any customer with life support equipment at their premises that relies on the supply of natural gas and is identified by a doctor.

Life Support can be applied for by any of the following:

- A non-authorized contact can apply on the condition that the form has been completed and signed correctly by the customer;
- A customer who uses an eligible life support machines; or
- A customer who has a household member who uses an eligible life support machine.

2.4 Examples of Life Support Equipment for Victorian Customers

Life support equipment has the same meaning as in section 40SA of the *Electricity Industry Act*, namely:

- (a) an oxygen concentrator
- (b) an intermittent peritoneal dialysis machine
- (c) a kidney dialysis machine
- (d) a chronic positive airways pressure respirator
- (e) Crigler-Najjar syndrome phototherapy equipment
- (f) a ventilator for life support
- (g) in relation to a particular customer – any other equipment (whether fueled by electricity or gas) that a registered medical practitioner certifies is required for a person residing at the customer's premises for life support.

'Other equipment' for the purpose of subclause (g) of the above definition of life support equipment may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- (i) external heart pumps
- (ii) respirators (iron lung)
- (iii) suction pumps (respiratory or gastric)
- (iv) feeding pumps (kangaroo pump, or total parenteral nutrition)
- (v) insulin pumps
- (vi) airbed vibrator
- (vii) hot water
- (viii) nebulizer, humidifiers or vaporizers
- (ix) apnoea monitors
- (x) medically required heating and air conditioning
- (xi) medically required refrigeration
- (xii) powered wheelchair.

3.0 Policy

3.1 Life Support Registration Process

Whether you need life support protection now or at a future date registering for life support protection is easy and only takes a few steps:

1. Contact us and let us know there is a need for life support protection.
2. We then inform your gas distributor, send you some information about the management of your energy supply in the event of an emergency or outage and provide you with a medical confirmation form.
 - a. Alternatively, you can contact your local electricity distributor or gas distributor directly.
3. To be registered, both you and your registered medical practitioner will need to complete and sign all sections of the life support registration form. Once complete, please send the form back to us by the nominated due date so we can ensure that your life support protection has been registered.

We understand that sometimes it may be difficult to return the form by the due date. If you would like to arrange a due date extension, please contact us as soon as possible. Keep in mind that failure to return the form may result in deregistration and loss of life support protection at the property.

Perpetual Energy will provide an emergency telephone contact number for both your distributor and our contact center. The Perpetual Energy contact center number is 02 8077 8592. The emergency contact numbers for the Victorian Gas Distribution Businesses are as follows:

- Ausnet - 13 17 99
- Australian Gas Networks - 1800 427 532
- Multinet - 132 691

If you decide to change retailer at your premises and continue to require life support equipment, you should advise your new retailer of the requirement for life support equipment.

The types of equipment that fall within the definition of life support equipment are shown in section 2.4 of this Policy.

As a life support customer, you may be eligible for concessions and rebates offered by the State or federal governments, information for these can be provided on request by calling our contact center on 02 8077 8592.

If you require interpreter services, call our contact center number (02 8077 8592) and ask for an interpreter. Perpetual Energy will arrange an interpreter through the TIS National Contact Centre.

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى خدمات الترجمة، اتصل بمركز الاتصال لدينا على رقم 0280778592 واطلب مترجمًا

如果您需要口译服务，请拨打我们的联络中心电话 (02 8077 8592) 并要求口译员

यदि आपको दुभाषिया सेवाओं की आवश्यकता है, तो हमारे संपर्क केंद्र नंबर (02 8077 8592) पर कॉल करें और दुभाषिया की मांग करें।

통역 서비스가 필요하신 경우, 당사 연락센터 0280778592로 전화하여 통역사를 요청하세요.

Jika Anda membutuhkan jasa interpreter, hubungi nomor contact center kami 0280778592 dan mintalah jasa interpreter

หากคุณต้องการบริการล่าม โปรดติดต่อศูนย์ติดต่อของเราที่หมายเลข 0280778592 และขอล่าม

Nếu bạn cần dịch vụ thông dịch viên, hãy gọi đến số trung tâm liên lạc của chúng tôi 0280778592 và yêu cầu thông dịch viên

Perpetual Energy is required to provide the above information to a relevant customer when advised by a distributor that life support equipment is required at the customer's premises, unless the information has been previously provided to the relevant customer at the relevant customer's current premises.

Perpetual Energy must record in a register of life support customers and residents, the life support customer details within one business day of being advised by a relevant customer or their distribution company that a life support resident resides or intends to reside at a relevant customer's premises. The register of life support customers and life support residents will include:

- The date when the relevant customer requires supply of energy at the premises for the purposes of life support equipment;
- When medical confirmation was received from the relevant customer in respect of the premises;
- The date when the relevant customer is deregistered and the reason for deregistration (if applicable); and a record of communications with the relevant customer as required elsewhere in this policy.

If the life support equipment present at the relevant customer's premises is powered by gas and electricity, Perpetual Energy will inform the customer, within one business day of being advised, that the customer should inform their electricity retailer that life support is required.

Within five business days of being advised by a relevant customer or their distribution company that a life support resident resides, or is intending to reside, at the relevant customer's premises, Perpetual Energy must give to the customer, the information specified above.

The details we must then give to your distributor within 1 business day are as follows:

- That a person residing or intending to reside at the relevant customer's premises requires life support equipment; and
- The date from which the life support equipment is required.

Perpetual Energy is not required to provide these details if the life support customer has previously advised the distributor for the premises that a person residing or intending to reside at the premises requires life support equipment, the customer advises Perpetual Energy that they have already provided medical confirmation to the distributor for the premises or Perpetual Energy confirms with the distributor for the premises that the relevant customer has already provided medical confirmation to the distributor.

Perpetual Energy has an ongoing obligation to update our register of life support customers and advise the distributor for the life support customer within one business day of receiving any relevant information about the life support equipment requirements for the relevant customer's premises (including medical confirmation) or any relevant contact details, unless the information was provided by the distributor where only our own register of life support customers is to be updated within one business day. This ongoing obligation ceases in respect of a relevant customer once that customer is validly deregistered as per Section 3.3 of this Policy.

[3.1.1 Medical Confirmation Form](#)

The medical confirmation form to be provided to the customer in Section 3.1 of this Policy must:

- Be dated;
- State that completion and return of the form to the retailer will satisfy the requirement to provide medical confirmation under the Energy Retail Code of Practice;
- Request the following information from the customer:
 - o Property address;
 - o The date from which the relevant customer requires supply of energy at the premises for the purposes of the life support equipment; and
 - o Medical confirmation;
- Specify the types of equipment that fall within the definition of life support equipment
- Advise the date by which the relevant customer must return the medical confirmation form to the retailer; and
- advise the relevant customer they can request an extension of time to complete and return the medical confirmation form.

3.1.2 Medical Confirmation Form Reminder Notice

Where a medical confirmation form has been provided to the customer, Perpetual Energy will:

- From the date of the medical confirmation form, give the relevant customer a minimum of 50 business days to provide medical confirmation;
- Provide the relevant customer at least two written notices to remind the relevant customer that the relevant customer must provide medical confirmation (each a confirmation reminder notice);
- Ensure the first confirmation reminder notice is provided no less than 15 business days from the date of issue of the medical confirmation form;
- Ensure the second confirmation reminder notice is provided no less than 15 business days from the date of issue of the first confirmation reminder notice; and
- On request from a relevant customer, give the relevant customer at least one extension of time to provide medical confirmation. The extension must be a minimum of 25 business days.

A confirmation reminder notice must:

- Be dated;
- State the date by which the medical confirmation is required;
- Specify the types of equipment that fall within the definition of life support equipment; and
- Advise the relevant customer that:
 - o The relevant customer must provide medical confirmation;
 - o The relevant customer is temporarily registered as requiring life support equipment until the medical confirmation is received;
 - o Failure to provide medical confirmation may result in the relevant customer being deregistered; and
 - o The relevant customer can request an extension of time to provide medical confirmation.

3.2 Supply interruptions

Life support protection does not guarantee an uninterrupted energy supply. There may be times your energy supply will be interrupted due to planned works for maintenance or upgrades of the meter, the network or scheduled planned upgrades by your local distributor.

With life support protection you will be given at least four business days' notice of the planned disruption by the party responsible for the interruption. Usually this will be your gas distributor.

It is also important that we have the customers' updated contact number and details. However, unplanned outages can also occur.

As unplanned outages can occur due to unforeseen circumstances such as extreme weather conditions or accidents that damage the gas distributor's infrastructure, so it is important that the customer has a plan of action. This plan of action might include:

- Keeping all necessary phone numbers in writing, secure in a safe place, including: your doctor, nearest hospital, an emergency contact and your local distributor and energy retailer;
- Ensuring that back up batteries to your life support equipment are always charged.
- Ensuring that any back up oxygen tanks are full;
- Ensuring you have a power bank that is always fully charged for your mobile phone; and
- Talking to your medical practitioner for any additional advice that applies to your life support equipment.

3.3 Deregistration

If a life support customer advises Perpetual Energy there is no longer a need for life support classification at the premises by the customer, the distributor informs Perpetual Energy the customer has been deregistered, or if a relevant customer is deregistered by Perpetual Energy, Perpetual Energy is required to update its life support register within one business day and if the advice did not come from the distributor, inform the distributor of the deregistration within five business days.

If a life support customer who has been registered under Section 48DI(1) of the Gas Industry Act fails to provide medical confirmation, Perpetual Energy may deregister the customer only when:

(i) Perpetual Energy has complied with the requirements under clause 164 of the Energy Retail Code of Practice;

(ii) Perpetual Energy has taken reasonable steps to contact the relevant customer in connection with the relevant customer's failure to provide medical confirmation in one of the following ways:

(A) in person;

(B) by telephone; or

(C) by electronic means;

(iii) Perpetual Energy has provided the relevant customer with a deregistration notice no less than 15 business days from the date of issue of the second confirmation reminder notice issued under subclause 164(1)(d) of the Energy Retail Code of Practice; and

(iv) the relevant customer has not provided medical confirmation before the date for deregistration specified in the deregistration notice.

A deregistration notice must:

- Be dated;
- Specify the date on which the relevant customer will be deregistered, which must be at least 15 business days from the date of the deregistration notice;
- Advise the relevant customer they will cease to be registered as requiring life support equipment unless medical confirmation is provided before the date for deregistration; and
- Advise the relevant customer that the relevant customer will no longer receive the protections under Division 4AA of the Gas Industry Act when the relevant customer is deregistered.

Where a relevant customer has been registered by Perpetual Energy under section 48DJ(1) of the Gas Industry Act, Perpetual Energy may deregister the relevant customer after being notified by the distributor that the distributor has deregistered the relevant customer's premises pursuant to clauses 4A.10 or 4A.11 of the Gas Distribution System Code.

If a life support customer who has been registered under Section 48DI(1) of the Gas Industry Act advises Perpetual Energy that the person for whom the life support equipment is required has vacated the premises or no longer requires the life support equipment, Perpetual Energy may deregister the relevant customer if they have provided written notification to the relevant customer advising:

(A) that the relevant customer will be deregistered on the basis that the relevant customer has advised the retailer that the person for whom the life support equipment is required has vacated the premises or no longer requires the life support equipment;

(B) the date on which the relevant customer will be deregistered, which must be at least 15 business days from the date of that written notification, or a date sooner than 15 business days if the customer gives explicit informed consent to that sooner deregistration date;

(C) that the relevant customer will no longer receive the life support protections when the premises is deregistered;

(D) that the relevant customer must contact the retailer prior to the date specified if the person for whom the life support equipment is required has not vacated the premises or requires the life support equipment; and

(E) the relevant customer has not contacted the retailer prior to the date specified to advise that the person for whom the life support equipment is required has not vacated the premises or requires the life support equipment.

Perpetual Energy may, at any time, request a relevant customer whose premises have been registered under sections 48DI(1) or 48DJ(1) of the Gas Industry Act to confirm whether the person for whom life support equipment is required still resides at the premises or still requires life support equipment.

[3.4 Disconnection](#)

Customers registered as having Life Support equipment at the premises are immune from receiving a disconnection notice due to non-payment of debts. We would encourage customers experiencing financial hardship to seek financial assistance via government subsidies and concessions while also applying for consideration under our Financial Hardship Policy.

3.5 Accountability and Responsibility

Accountability and responsibility for this policy is outlined below.

Chief Executive Officer

Overall responsibility for compliance with this policy.

Overall responsibility for enforcing accountability.

Overall responsibility for providing resources.

Overall responsibility for performance monitoring.

Compliance Manager

Develop frameworks and procedures in compliance with this policy.

Enforce responsibilities to achieve compliance with frameworks and procedures.

Provide appropriate resources for the execution of the frameworks and procedures.

Employees, Contractors and Volunteers

Participate where required in the development of frameworks and procedures in compliance with this policy.

Comply with frameworks and procedures developed to achieve compliance with this policy.

This policy complies with the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

4.0 Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed at the request of Perpetual Energy, in the event of significant change in the Executive team, significant changes to legislation applicable to the subject matter of the policy or, in any other case, at least bi-annually.