



## Utility Medical Protections: Quick Guide for Health Care Providers

Patients who rely on continuous electricity, gas, or steam—or who face life-threatening risks without it—may qualify for special utility protections.  
Your documentation can prevent dangerous service interruptions.

### 1. Life-Support Equipment (LSE) Protections

#### What They Offer

- Advance notice of planned outages
- Wellness checks during emergencies
- Priority restoration during service disruptions
- Protection from shutoff for nonpayment

#### Examples of LSE

Oxygen concentrators  
Ventilators  
Dialysis or suction machines  
Infant apnea monitors  
or other equipment essential to sustain life.

**For Patients Without “Traditional” Equipment** If no specific qualifying device is present, a treating physician may still request LSE status with a letter on practice stationery including:

- Physician name, practice name, license number, and signature
- Brief description of the patient’s condition
- Statement that “loss of power would place the patient at risk of serious injury or inability to sustain life.”

*Patients must renew as required by their utility annually.*

**2. Medical Certification (Temporary Shutoff Protection):** If service loss would aggravate a serious illness or disability, patients can receive 30-day protection from shutoff.

#### Provider Letter Must be Written on Stationary/Letterhead and Include:

- Patient name & date of birth
- Service address & account holder name
- Statement: “Loss of electricity, gas, or steam service will aggravate a serious illness or medical condition.”
- Provider name, license number, phone, address, and signature

Patients must renew as required by their utility every 30 days. If the medical condition will persist after this, please specify for how long you believe the customer should be protected for as some utility companies may grant longer protections.

**3. Elderly, Blind, Disabled (EBD) Protections:** For households where all residents are elderly (62+), blind, disabled, or under 18. Even if the household does not fit all these requirements, a letter should be completed to place a medical protection temporarily if the company will not grant EBD coding.

Utilities must:

- Attempt personal contact 72 hours before shutoff
- Notify local social services and continue service for at least 15 business days
- Restore service within 24 hours once EBD status is known

### HIPAA & Confidentiality

Provide only the minimum necessary to establish need (e.g., “chronic and severe condition,” “requires refrigerated medication”). Do not include diagnoses or detailed medical histories. You are not required to share information you deem unnecessary.

### Questions or Support

Public Utility Law Project of New York (PULP)  
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