

Water Corporation Family Violence Policy

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Water Corporation

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If you wish to access a hard copy of this policy (at no charge), please contact us via our contact details listed at the bottom of this policy.

Policy Statement

We listen to our customers and understand the difficulty faced by victims of family violence. Nothing is more important than the safety and wellbeing of our employees and customers. We have zero tolerance for family violence and will do everything we can to support those affected. Water Corporation customers experiencing family violence will be treated with empathy and compassion. We are committed to ensuring personal and private information remains confidential.

Purpose

Water Corporation is committed to supporting customers affected by family violence. This policy outlines our specialised support for customers experiencing family violence, including our commitment to privacy and sensitivity of customers' information.

Legislation

The *Water Services Code of Practice (Family Violence) 2020* specifies the minimum requirements that apply to Water Corporation in relation to support for victims of family violence.

What is family violence?

Family violence is the intentional and systematic use of violence and abuse to control, coerce and create fear. It can be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, spiritual, or social in nature. Further information on what is considered family violence is available at wa.gov.au/government/document-collections/what-family-and-domestic-violence.

Perpetrators of family violence can use control over their victims as a form of economic abuse, such as incurring debt in the victim's name, refusing to contribute to costs and refusing to pay bills.

Victims of family violence may suffer significant psychological and emotional impacts while attempting to resolve debts at the same time as ensuring their personal safety. In addition, perpetrators may gain access to the victims' confidential information such as their whereabouts, for example, through their knowledge of the personal details of the victim.

Our role in addressing family violence

Water Corporation has zero tolerance for family violence and can provide specialised support to affected customers.

Water Corporation manages customers affected by family violence and trained specialists interact with these customers ensuring they can appropriately respond and assist. This ensures our customers:

- can have confidential and respectful interactions with trained specialists who:
 - are easy to deal with and can offer appropriate support

- can flag the customer's account as a private account during the initial conversation to ensure the customer only discloses their details once
 - ensure all further interactions are entrusted to specialists trained in managing family violence.
- understand Water Corporation is committed to keeping their personal information confidential and safe, as all interactions are recorded in a secured section of the Customer Billing platform, that can only be accessed by trained specialists.
- can be confident a trained specialist will appropriately assess their situation to determine if they are experiencing payment difficulties or financial hardship and offer:
 - access to a suitable financial hardship program or
 - flexible payment plans or payment options, and/or
 - any financial relief and concessions available, and
 - time and other information to help them consider their options and make informed decisions.
- can be assured if they're experiencing payment difficulties or financial hardship, that a 3- month hold will be put on the account where no recovery action will be taken, and no interest will accrue.
- can be assured that we will consider reducing or waiving any fees, charges, or debts, to the extent to which another person may have contributed to the outstanding debt.
- can be confident they will not be requested to provide written evidence of family violence unless it is reasonably necessary and, if so, a trained specialist will provide assistance, and facilitate the process, from start to finish.
- will be provided with information and access to our complaints policy and procedure during the initial conversation.

Support available

Customers will be provided with information about financial support and assistance available, including specialised external support networks and resources that are applicable to their unique situation. These referrals will occur during the initial conversation with the customer and include:

- 1800RESPECT National Sexual Assault, Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service: a national confidential telephone and online counselling and support service. Phone: 1800 737 732.
- Men's Domestic Violence Helpline: provides telephone information and referral for male perpetrators, as well as male victims of family and domestic violence. Phone: (08) 9223 1199 or free call 1800 000 599.
- Women's Domestic Violence Helpline: provides crisis support and referral for women, with or without children, experiencing family and domestic violence (including referrals to women's refuges). Phone: (08) 9223 1188 or free call 1800 007 339.
- Crisis Care: provides after-hours response to concerns for a child's safety and wellbeing and information and referral for people experiencing a crisis. Phone: (08) 9223 1111 or free call 1800 199 008.

- MensLine Australia: provides telephone and online 24/7 counselling for men and boys dealing with family and relationship difficulties. This includes support for men who are concerned that their behaviour is hurting the people they care about. Phone: 1300 78 99 78.
- Sexual Assault Resource Centre: provides a range of free services to people affected by sexual violence. Phone: (08) 6458 1828 or free call 1800 199 888.
- Yourtoolkit: online resource providing free, step-by-step guide on personal safety, support services and money matters for people facing family and domestic violence. For more information, visit yourtoolkit.com

More support services, useful information and resources are listed on the [Department of Communities'](#) website.

Complaints policy and procedure

Please refer to our complaints policy and procedure at watercorporation.com.au/mediation if you are not satisfied with how we have handled your situation.

If you have a complaint, please contact us via:

Phone: 13 13 85 (8am - 5pm weekdays, except public holidays)

Website: watercorporation.com.au/feedback

National Relay Service: 13 36 77 (for customers with hearing or speech difficulties)

Translating and Interpreter Service: to arrange an interpreter, call us on 13 14 50

If your complaint isn't resolved or you are unhappy with the outcome, you may refer your complaint to the Energy & Water Ombudsman. The Energy & Water Ombudsman will investigate your complaint and may mediate the dispute.

Address: Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia, PO Box Z5386, St Georges Terrace, Perth WA 6831

Phone: (08) 9220 7588 or 1800 754 004 (free from landlines)

Email: energyandwater@ombudsman.wa.gov.au

For further information on the Energy and Water Ombudsman complaints process, please visit energyandwater.ombudsman.wa.gov.au

Application and review

The Head of Customer Billing Operations is responsible for overseeing the operation and management of our Family Violence Policy, including monitoring the effectiveness of the policy. All Water Corporation employees are required to be aware of this policy and the options available to assist customers.

This policy will be reviewed at least every five years to ensure it meets the needs of customers experiencing family violence. The review will incorporate the views and recommendations of our stakeholders.

We will ensure procedures and work instructions are reviewed and maintained to ensure our interactions with customers experiencing family violence are conducted in a sensitive manner according to the guidelines set in this policy.