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Essential reminder for life support plans

Essential Energy customers who require electricity for medical life support equipment are being reminded to update their contact details and be prepared in the case of unexpected power outages.

General Manager Safety, HR and Environment, David Nardi, said while Essential Energy aimed to provide a safe and reliable electricity supply to customers, unplanned power outages could still occur – particularly during storm season.

“We encourage customers to keep their records up to date with both Essential Energy and their electricity retailer to ensure their premises is registered as having life support equipment,” David said.

“Customers are also advised to have a back-up plan for how to operate critical medical equipment during a power outage.”

Under the National Electricity Retail Rules, life support equipment is defined as any of the following:

- an oxygen concentrator
- an intermittent peritoneal dialysis machine
- a kidney dialysis machine
- a chronic positive airways pressure respirator
- crigler najjar syndrome phototherapy equipment
- a ventilator for life support
- any other equipment that a registered medical practitioner certifies as required for life support.

“Registering as a life support customer doesn’t guarantee continuous power supply to a premise, so customers should discuss an action plan with their doctor or medical service provider to prepare for unplanned outages,” David said.

Keep contact information handy including the names, addresses and telephone numbers of medical support, the nearest hospital, and someone nearby who is willing to assist during outages. Always ensure back-up batteries for medical equipment are fully charged and there is access to a phone that does not require a power supply.

“Occasionally, Essential Energy may need to contact a life support customer directly – such as during a prolonged power outage – so it’s important for us to maintain accurate phone records,” David said.

To update your records, including whether the life support equipment is no longer required, contact Essential Energy on 13 23 91.

Under the National Energy Customer Framework, Essential Energy provides life support customers with at least four business days’ written notice of a planned power outage.

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Essential Energy is the operator of one of Australia’s largest electricity networks spanning 95 per cent of New South Wales’ land mass. Owned by the New South Wales Government, Essential Energy also provides water and sewerage services to customers in far western New South Wales.