

Financial Hardship

Definition: A situation where a customer is unable, reasonably because of illness, unemployment or other reasonable cause to discharge their financial obligations under their contract with Spirit, however they reasonably expect to be able to do so with adjustments to their payment / service arrangements.

Spirit Financial Hardship Policy

Spirit has this policy in place to ensure that if a residential customer is experiencing financial hardship we can work together to resolve the debt while maintaining access to some telecommunications services.

The Definition of Hardship

Financial hardship involves a customer's inability to pay their bills not an **unwillingness** to do so. However they expect to be able to do so if payment / service arrangements can be made, Hardship can take place over a limited time or in some cases can be long term. Hardship may arise in the following circumstances:

- Loss of employment of the customer or family member
- Family breakdown
- Illness, including physical incapacity, hospitalisation, or mental illness
- A death to the family
- Other factors resulting in unforeseen changes in the customer's capacity to meet their payment obligations.

Situations where a customer is simply experiencing temporary payment difficulties would not necessarily be addressed by the financial hardship policy. If your circumstances fall under temporary payment difficulties please contact Spirit on 1300 007 001 as other assistance can be provided such a short term payment arrangement.

Negotiating Financial Hardship Arrangements

The process for reaching a financial arrangement should be reasonable for both parties. In coming to an arrangement Spirit will take into account your personal circumstances and may also ask for supporting evidence to support your claim.

We may ask this from you if:

- You have been a customer for less than 6 months
- Your financial agreement needs to be long term
- The debt amount is considered by Spirit to be significant • If Spirit is concerned that there may be fraud involved

Examples of evidence that Spirit may require to support your claim of financial hardship assistance:

- Evidence of an unforeseen change in circumstances
- Evidence that you have met with a registered financial advisor
- Stat dec (witnessed by certified person who is familiar with your circumstances) • Financial documentation (social security statement etc)

Your Obligation:

Acknowledge the debt and the obligation to pay the debt plus current monthly service bills

- Provide sufficient information so both parties can establish a suitable payment arrangement
- Indicate a willingness to reduce usage to level that you are able to pay while reducing any previous debt amount
- Make agreed payments on time and advise Spirit once the payment has been made
- Immediately notify Spirit if any further financial difficulty occurs so your arrangement

Our Obligation:

- To ensure all staff are trained in general credit area to manage financial hardship
- Confirm that you are legally liable to pay the debt and ensure none of the debt is in dispute
- If limiting services as part of the arrangement that all limitations are explained
- To ensure the arrangement is one that the customer can meet and monitor the arrangement
- Ensure that the customer is aware of their rights under the agreement

Establishment of Financial Hardship:

Once it has been established that you meet the criteria for financial hardship it is expected that you keep your payment and service arrangement.

Conditions:

- You are a residential customer
- We wish to maintain a relationship with you as a customer
- The financial hardship policy is reasonable for both customer and Spirit
- It is at the discretion of Spirit to waive late payment fees/ early termination fees

Termination of The Agreement:

Credit management on your account will be put on hold while your financial hardship request is being reviewed and also while it is in place, unless:

- You breach the requirements of the financial hardship policy
- If you do not contact us to renegotiate the financial hardship policy and it is then breached
- If we cannot make contact with you, normal credit management will be reactivated and this could mean the possible suspension/ termination of services or referral to an external agent for collection

Spirit will take reasonable steps to contact you or your authorised representative before credit management is undertaken.

If you require Financial hardship assistance please contact our credit management team on 1300 007 001 between the hours of 8.30am and 5pm EST