



ELECTRICITY BILLS AND METERS

FAST FACTS FOR HOUSEHOLDS

YOUR POWER USE

Ninety per cent of power used by households and businesses in NSW comes from coal fired power stations. An average Sydney home uses the electricity produced from 3.7 tonnes of black coal to power their home each year.

Using less power can help reduce your power bill. A great way to start reducing your power use is to first understand just how much you are using. Knowing how to read your electricity bills and meter will help you understand how much power your home is using and track the effect of your power saving measures.

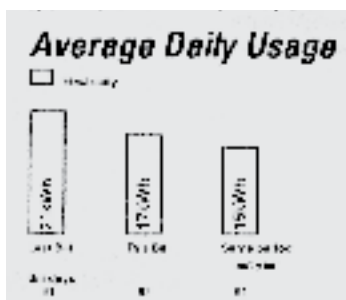
UNDERSTANDING YOUR ELECTRICITY BILL

Most electricity companies charge households for their power every three months. This is shown on your bill as the *billing period*. The amount you are charged depends on the amount of power you have used throughout those three months.

A useful section on your bill is the *average daily usage* chart. This is usually found on the second page of your bill and appears as a bar chart/graph. It shows how much electricity you have used each day as an average, measured in kilowatt hours (kWh), and the price you are being charged.

The *average daily usage* chart also compares your power use for the current bill with previous bills, including for the same time last year. It may also track your greenhouse gas emissions during the same period.

The *average daily usage* chart is a good way to compare your power usage over time and throughout the seasons. It clearly shows you how any changes you are making at home are being reflected on your bill.



MEASURING YOUR POWER

Electricity is measured in kilowatt hours. A kilowatt is made up of 1000 watts. For example, using a 60 watt light bulb for one hour uses 0.06 kilowatt hours of electricity. Using a 60 watt light bulb for 1000 hours uses 60 kilowatt hours of electricity.

READING YOUR METER

Learning how to read your electricity meter can help you to keep track of how much power your household is using.

A simple way of monitoring your power use is to check your electricity meter at the beginning and end of each day. By comparing the two totals you can measure how much electricity you have used. For example, if your meter reads 35,000 kWh on Monday night and 35,010 kWh at the same time on Tuesday night then your house has used 10 kWh in 24 hours.



Electricity meters are generally easy to find and are usually located in a metal box outside your house or apartment building. They will be one of two types:

- analogue
- electronic.

An analogue meter has a series of round dials. If you have an **analogue meter**, read the numbers from left to right starting with the first digit on the far left. The numbers are displayed in increments of 10,000. If the dial hand points between numbers, read the lower number. For example, if a meter reads 3 – 2 – 4 – 5 – 6, that represents 32,456 kWh, which is your total electricity use to date.



There are simple things we can all do that will lower power bills and reduce our impact on the environment.

Electronic meters have easy to read displays. Each electric meter is different and may have a series of screens you can scroll through for different information. To read your total power use press the display button until the screen shows the total main circuit kWh reading. Refer to the instruction manual of your meter for further information.



POWER MONITORS

As well as reading the meter, there are other devices that can be used to monitor the power use of your house and individual appliances.

- **Power monitor** – a device installed in your fuse box that displays how much power you are using at any given time. A power monitor can help you identify which appliances use the most power and help you to monitor their use.
- **Appliance power meter** – a device that you plug into an appliance and into your power point to measure how much power that appliance is using. This meter can help you understand the actual running cost of an electrical appliance or if it's using more power than it should.
- **Smart Meter (Interval Meter)** – a new type of power meter that gives you real time information about your electricity usage and communicates that information back to your electricity provider. Most households have their power use measured by traditional 'accumulation' meters that record consumption over a three month period. Smart meters measure how much electricity is used every 30 minutes. This means customers can better monitor their power use and pay different rates for electricity based on when it is used.

DID YOU KNOW? You can borrow a Save Power Kit for free from selected NSW libraries to measure and understand your power use at home. For more information, visit savepower.nsw.gov.au/librarykits

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED GREENPOWER?

GreenPower is a government accreditation scheme that allows your electricity retailer to purchase on your behalf electricity generated from renewable energy sources such as sun, wind, water and waste.

GreenPower is offered by most electricity suppliers and is a simple way to reduce our demand on electricity sourced from coal.

By choosing GreenPower you are also helping the industry to grow. Around 700,000 Australian households support GreenPower. The more people who choose to buy GreenPower, the more renewable energy Australia can produce.

You can choose to source between 10 to 100 per cent of your power from GreenPower. For more information, visit www.greenpower.gov.au

Find out how you can save power and money, and help our environment.

Visit savepower.nsw.gov.au