

Bills and metering

Learn how to understand your electricity and gas bill, and how your meter works.

It's important that you know if you are being billed correctly, so that you don't end up paying more than you need to for your energy bills. Submitting regular meter readings ensures that you are only paying for the electricity or gas that you use, and that you are not being over charged.

Why submitting regular meter readings is important

Regular meter readings are important as they tell energy suppliers how much gas and electricity you're using so you can be billed correctly. They make sure you're only paying for the energy you use.

If your supplier doesn't get regular meter readings, it may guess your usage and estimate your bill. If this happens you usually end up paying too little or even too much. Meter readings only takes a few minutes and could save you money.

There are different types of meters depending on how you pay for your electricity or gas.

How electricity and gas meters work

Electricity meter readings

NIE Networks (NIE) is responsible for reading your electricity meter and will visit your home four times per year to do this. If they can't get access to your meter, they'll leave you a card to take your own reading.

If you pay your electricity bill by direct debit or quarterly credit or cash, you can also submit quarterly readings to your supplier to make sure your bill is accurate. Suppliers can set up a text or email alert to remind you to provide a reading.

If you've a prepayment/pay as you go meter you don't need to submit readings to your supplier as you're paying and using as you need. You can see how much electricity you're using on your meter. NIE Networks will continue to check your meter to make sure the equipment is safe and check that it's giving accurate, up to date information.

[NIE Networks](#) provides guidance based on your meter type and advise if you're not sure on how to read your meter.

Gas meter readings

If you pay by direct debit or quarterly credit you've a credit meter and means your supplier will take a reading at least once a year.

For pay as you go/prepayment meters you don't need to submit a reading to your supplier as they'll take a reading at least once a year.

[SSE Airtricity](#) and [firmus energy](#) have more information on how you can read your meter.

Video on reading your meter

Watch our video below which explains how to read your electricity and gas meter.

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Understanding your electricity and gas bills

Advice on how to read your electricity and gas bills.

It's important to understand your electricity and gas bills so you can see exactly what energy you are using and then take steps to cut your usage, find a cheaper tariff, or even switch supplier.

If you have a credit meter, you will receive a regular bill showing your tariff, unit price, energy usage, payments made, and account balance.

An 'E' beside any meter readings means your usage has been estimated and you may be getting charged for energy you haven't actually used.

Always provide a meter reading when asked by your supplier as this will make sure your bill is correct.

If you have pay-as-you-go meters, you will receive an annual statement showing your top-ups and usage for the previous 12 months.

Video about understanding your electricity and gas bills

The video below explains how to read and understand your bills.

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Help with meters and billing

If you need help understanding your bill or submitting a meter reading, contact your supplier directly.

Remember all energy companies are part of [Quick Check 101](#) which allows you to call and check the identity of someone calling to your home about your gas, electricity or water supplies.

If you need some extra help, you can contact the Consumer Council on 028 9025 1600.