



Understanding Your Electric Bill

Your monthly electric bill can help identify energy and cost saving opportunities for your home, business and community.

Your monthly electric bill provides loads of information to help you identify energy and cost-saving opportunities for your home, business, and community. Knowing how to read your bill can help you identify billing errors. Understanding how electricity is measured and charged can lead you to discover ways to lower your bill by controlling when and how energy is used. In addition, once you take steps to reduce your energy consumption, your monthly energy bill can help monitor your energy usage by giving you a record of your progress!

Your Electric Bill Layout

Basic account information including account number, service address, customer name and mailing address, and bill due date are typically found on the first page of your monthly bill. An account summary, which contains your previous balance and any payments received during the billing period are also featured in this first section along with your current charges that determine the total amount due. Your utility company may also include a "special message" section on the first page to direct you to important information on new services, programs, and customer events.

Rate Schedules

In Connecticut, each utility company offers different rates for different types of customers such as residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional. These "rate schedules" determine how you are billed. Rate schedules also vary within category based on the amount of electrical load and voltage requirements, and can adjust up or down depending on the season.

Utilities also offer optional "Time of Use" rates to allow customers to save money by shifting their energy use to "off-peak" periods. In Connecticut, the cost to provide electricity is generally highest between noon and 8:00 p.m.

weekdays, and in the summer months. (*Think: afternoon heat wave = higher prices*). Off-peak rates during all other times and on weekends provide customers with an opportunity to reduce overall demand, and a financial incentive to lower their monthly bill. While "Time of Use" rates are currently optional, mandatory "Time of Use" electric rates are being phased-in, beginning this year with high-use customers, and ending in 2013.

Rate schedules for customers of UI and CL&P (investor-owned utilities) are governed by the Connecticut Department of Public Utilities (DPUC), and must be approved by the DPUC before they are changed. Rates for the Connecticut's six municipally-owned electric utilities are not regulated by the DPUC, and are generally lower because they are exempted from certain taxes and renewable portfolio standards (RPS), and because they have greater flexibility in purchasing power on the wholesale market.

Contact your utility company and request a description of all rate schedules to be sure you are being billed at the correct rate and are aware of the next rate change date.

Your Electric Meter

In the Meter Information section of your utility bill you will find the meter reading for last month and this month, the difference between the two readings, and the total kilowatt-hours* used during this period. You will also see if the meter reading is based on an actual reading or an estimated reading. Utilities will estimate your electric usage based on past usage if they are unable to arrange a direct reading because of access, weather, or some other difficulty. Any differences between the actual or estimated bill will be determined at the next actual reading.

An estimated bill may cause your bill to be higher or lower than you would expect. If you would rather not pay the estimated bill you can choose to sign up for your utilities equal

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ELECTRIC BILL

payment plan that calculates 11 equal monthly payments, with the 12th month reflecting actual usage and the additional amount due, or credit owed. You can also choose to read your own meter and call in the reading yourself.

Automatic read meters, or AMR, is a technology that utilities can use to collect information from your meter and transfer it to a central database for billing and/or analysis. AMR technologies include handheld, mobile, and network technologies that read the meter remotely by radio signal, telephone, or power line. AMR technology is intended to limit the number of estimated bills based on past usage, and reduce employee trips to read meters. Still, there are occasions when even with AMR, the utility is unable to read your meter, and again you have the choice to pay the estimated bill, opt for a regular payment plan, or read the meter yourself and submit the reading directly to your utility.

Reading Your Meter

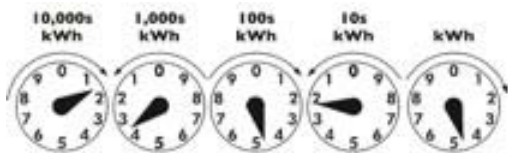
Each meter is numbered—make sure your meter number matches the same meter number on your bill.

Digital Meters – If you have a digital meter, simply read the numbers exactly as they appear on the face of the meter (left to right) and call it in to your utility company as soon as possible.

Dial Meters – If your meter has round dials like those pictured below, follow these instructions.

1. Stand directly in front of the meter so you can clearly see the pointer on each dial.
2. Each of the five dials represents one digit in the current reading. As you will see, the dials move clockwise and counter-clockwise.
3. Read the numbers, beginning from RIGHT TO LEFT.
4. If the pointer is between two numbers choose the lower number. However, if the pointer is between 0 and 9, choose 9.

For example, this meter reads 13424.



You can also read your meter from week to week to monitor your energy usage. Let's say next week your meter reads 13659. Simply subtract last week's meter read 13424 from this week's 13659 and you will see that 235 kilowatt hours have been used.

The Different Charges

With the introduction of energy deregulation in the late 1990s, Connecticut's two largest electric utilities were restructured. These utilities were required to sell their power plants and other companies were allowed to compete to sell electricity to Connecticut consumers. Your bill reflects this restructuring so that the generation and delivery portions of your bill are separated and itemized.

Generation Charge

Since 1999, CL&P and UI no longer produce electricity. They purchase it from private companies and deliver it to customers. Because of this restructuring, other companies can now compete to provide you with your electricity. You can (and should!) choose your own electric supplier and shop for the cleanest source and most competitive price for your home, business or institution!

Remember, only the Generation Service Charge (GSC) is open to competition; delivery and customer service during power outages will continue to be provided (and charged) by your current electric utility. If you have any questions on how to shop for an electricity provider, call DPUC Customer Outreach at 1-888-922-3782 or visit <http://www.ct-energyinfo.com>.

Please note: The Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative (CMEEC) is responsible for procuring power and financing and building generating resources for members of the cooperative, including Groton Utilities, Jewett City Department of Public Utilities, Norwich Public Utilities, and the Second and Third Taxing Districts of Norwalk (South Norwalk and East Norwalk, respectively). CMEEC also provides power for the Wallingford Department of Public Utilities, Bozrah Light and Power, and the Mohegan Tribal Authority. As a wholesale power supplier, CMEEC is able to enter into long-term contracts at the lowest available prices. Customers of CMEEC members are not eligible to shop for competitive suppliers; however, these customers are currently enjoying some of the lowest electric rates in Connecticut. CMEEC is currently the only such electric cooperative in Connecticut.

Delivery Charge

Delivery charges are generally represented by a transmission charge, which is the charge for delivering power from the power plant over high-voltage lines, and distribution charge which is a charge for delivering the electricity over poles and wires to homes and businesses.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ELECTRIC BILL

Competitive Transition Assessment (CTA)

To allow your electric distribution company to recover "stranded costs"; DPUC authorizes utilities to collect for investments (such as power plants) that the utilities did not recover when they auctioned off these assets.

Combined Public Benefits Charge is the sum of three charges mandated by state law. These charges fund conservation and renewable energy programs and cover the utility's costs in complying with various public policies, e.g., protecting hardship customers from shutoffs in the winter months.

Federally Mandated Congestion Charges (FMCC)

While electricity demand has grown in Connecticut, the state's energy infrastructure has not. FMCC charges for the congestion on the transmission system (particularly in the southwestern third of the state) and the legislative mandated measures to respond it. Congestion limits the ability of the utilities to import power from other parts of Connecticut and other regions. To maintain system reliability in the face of this congestion, older, less efficient power plants in southwestern Connecticut need to run even though their costs of

production exceed what their owners can earn by selling the power on the wholesale market. A large part of the congestion charge revenue goes to plant owners for "reliability-must run" payments. Congestion charges have decreased in recent years with the construction of the Bethel-Norwalk and Norwalk-Middletown transmission lines, still FMCC charges account for about 6% of the average residential bill in Connecticut.

Monthly usage review

Your energy use will vary month to month. If you heat with oil, gas, or wood, your monthly electric bill will be lower in the winter. If you have air conditioning, your highest bills will be in the summer. Review the graph that represents your daily energy use and you will easily be able to determine which months you use more electricity. Once you identify which months to expect the highest usage and where your electric costs are going you will be able to make lifestyle changes that can lower your monthly bill and decrease your overall energy consumption

What is a kilowatt-hour (kWh)?

In order to determine how much electricity costs, consumers need to understand how it is measured. Electric companies charge their customers by the kilowatt-hour, represented as kWh. A kilowatt equals 1000 watts.

A kilowatt-hour refers to the use of an electrical device or combination of devices that use 1000 watts for an hour.

For example, a 100 watt light bulb on for 10 hours would equal one kilowatt hour, or 1 kWh.

Similarly, a 1,500 watt portable space heater will use 1,500 watts in an hour or 1.5 kWh. To determine the cost of operating it for the winter season, consider a typical Connecticut household may use the heater 45 hours during the winter months (1/2 hour per day for three months). As of February 2008, Connecticut's electric rates averaged 16.4 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh), so we calculate:

$$1500 \text{ watts}/1000 = 1.5 \text{ kWh} \times 45 \text{ hours} \times 16.4 \text{ cents} = \$11.07$$

To calculate the average operating cost for any electrical appliance you can use the following formula:

$$\text{watts}/1000 = \text{kWh} \times \text{hours of operation} = \text{kWh} \times \text{kWh rate} = \text{cost.}$$

Watts can usually be found on the appliance nameplate. If the nameplate lists amps, just convert to watts using the formula: **volts x amps = watts.**