



Understanding your electricity bill

If your electricity and gas bills leave you a little bemused, don't worry, you're not alone.

But it is certainly well worth taking the trouble to understand your bills, because this is the first step to taking control of your energy use and saving yourself money.

This leaflet tells you how to read an **electricity** bill. Use the key below and overleaf for an explanation of each item on the bill marked by a red numbered disc.

Note that electricity and gas bills can look very similar, especially if you have the same supplier. For an explanation of how to read your **gas** bill, please see our other leaflet.

For free domestic energy advice, call **0800 512 012**

KEY

- 1 These are the contact details of your electricity supplier including phone number and office hours.
- 2 Your 'customer reference number' (also called an 'account number') is unique to you, and you'll need it when you contact your supplier.
- 3 This is the date your electricity bill was issued.
- 4 You are charged for the electricity you have used (or are estimated to have used) during the 'bill period', usually 3 months.

Page 1 of 2

Best ELECTRICITY Ltd

Mr G Smith
123 Fore Street
Newtown
NT3 5ZZ

Customer reference number **2468 13579 0004**

Bill date **16 January 2010**

Need help?

Call 0845 000 246

Mon - Fri: 07.00 - 20.00
Saturday: 08.00 - 18.00
Sunday: 08.00 - 12.00

Please have your customer reference number handy when you call us

Your electricity bill

Please pay by **£93.20** by 31 January 2010

4 Billing summary

Bill period: 1 October 2009 to 31 December 2009

5 Your last bill	£76.56
Payment received on 5 October	£76.56
Balance before this bill	£00.00
6 Electricity you've used (estimate)	£88.77
7 VAT at 5%	£4.38
8 Please pay	£93.20

We must receive your payment by 31 January 2010

Electricity Supply Number

S	04	234	789
	04	1234	456 123

- 5 This is the amount of your **previous** bill, and, on the next line, the date you paid it. It is **lower** than the current bill because your home used less electricity – possibly because it covers a less dark and wintery period so the lights weren't on for as long.
- 6 This is the total cost of the electricity you've used in this period before VAT is added. In this case it is an **estimate**, not a meter reading. For more about estimates see point 12 overleaf.
- 7 The VAT charged on electricity supplied for **domestic** use is 5%. If the VAT rate on your bill is higher than this it means you are being charged a **commercial** rate and you should contact your supplier immediately.
- 8 This is the amount you owe for the electricity you have used. On the other side of the bill it will explain how this figure was reached. Some suppliers offer a cash incentive for prompt payment.
- 9 This is your 'MPAN' or 'meter point administration number'. You may need this if you switch your electricity supplier.



If you don't check your bills, you may end up paying more than you should

continued ...

KEY

- 10** Your 'tariff' (also called a 'package' or 'plan') decides the rate you pay and other terms and conditions. It won't always be shown on your bill. You should make sure you are on a tariff that suits your personal and financial circumstances.
- 11** This is the meter reading at the **beginning** of the period for which you are being charged on this bill.
- 12** This is a 'reading' for the **end** of the period for which you are being charged on this bill. However, the 'E' in brackets means that it is an **estimate**, and not a real reading. If this estimate is too low, you'll be charged for the difference on your next bill (and may have a nasty surprise), so you should check your meter to see that the estimate is at least close to what your meter says. For information on how to read an electricity meter, see our other leaflet.
- 13** This is the 'last reading' minus the 'previous reading' and equals the amount of electricity you've used, or are estimated to have used in the bill period.
- 14** This shows that the first 222 kWh of electricity that you use costs more (per kWh) than the electricity you use after this. This is normal practice for electricity supply.
- 15** This is the total you need to pay before VAT. (see **points 7 and 8**).
- 16** This explains about estimated meter readings (see **point 12** above).
- 17** Your energy supplier will be able to provide the information on this bill in another form. This text explains how.

Page 2 of 2

Your usage - in detail

10 Your current tariff is **Standard**

11 Previous reading	12 Last reading	13 kWh used	14 Pence per kWh	Charges for energy used
60150 1 October	60955 31 December (E)	805	First 222 kWh at 17.312p Next 583 kWh at 8.635p	38.43 50.34
				15 Total charges: £88.77

Estimated meter readings

16 Estimated readings are based on your previous usage to date. If we don't hold details of your previous usages, we base the readings on average consumption levels.

To make sure you receive accurate bills, please contact us directly to submit your meter readings.

Services for customers with specific needs

If you have any special needs, please contact us to let us know. We can you your bills in large print or in braille, or on audio tape if required.

To find out what we can do to help you, contact us on **0845 000 246**.

18 Bank Giro Credit

Reference (customer account number)

Credit account number

Amount due £

By transfer from bank account number

Cashier's stamp and initials 


123 4567 8978 5634 12456

- 18** A payment slip is provided if you wish to pay your bill at the bank or by post. Another way to pay your bill is by monthly direct debit, and for some customers there are advantages to doing so. Firstly, most suppliers will give you a discount if you pay by direct debit. Secondly it spreads the cost (you pay a smaller amount every month and not a bigger amount every quarter) and thirdly the system is automated so the bill can't be lost or forgotten about.



Call us free for advice on your gas or electricity bill or other domestic energy issues

0800 512 012* or go to cse.org.uk/advice



3 St Peter's Court
Bedminster Parade
Bristol
BS3 4AQ

0117 934 1400
info@cse.org.uk
reg charity 298740

We are a national charity that shares our knowledge and experience to help people change the way they think and act on energy.



More energy advice at cse.org.uk/advice