

Gas and electricity

How to read the meters

If you want to keep track of your use of gas and electricity, you need to know how to read your meter

Which meter is which?

It's easy to get them confused! Electric cables can be seen coming in and out of an electricity meters, while thicker pipes and hoses come out of gas meters.

Electricity

Electricity meters show how much power a home has used, measured in kilowatt hours (abbreviated to kWh). Some older ones have a series of five dials, like little clock faces (top right). To read this kind of meter, start with the dial on the **left**, even if the dials are arranged slightly differently from the picture below.

Write down the number that the pointer has **just gone past**, in this case '0', then move on to the next dial. This looks as if it's showing '6', but, remember, we want the number that it has **passed** which is '5'.

Sometimes a pointer may be directly above a number, so it is difficult to tell if it has *passed* it or hasn't quite reached it. If this is the case, look at the dial to its right. If that one shows a high number, then the pointer has not passed the digit that it is hovering above. If it shows a low number it has.

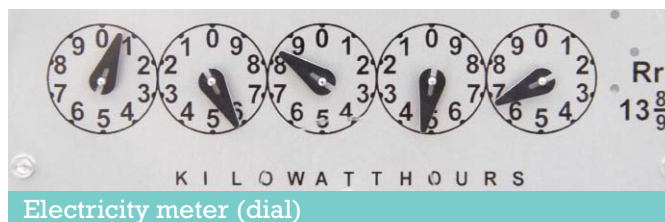
The full reading for this meter is 05846. When reading an electricity meter, you should always end up with a five digit number.



Gas and electricity meters show a cumulative total; they aren't reset each time the meter is read

Prepayment meters

Additional information is displayed on **prepayment meters**. For an explanation of these, contact the fuel provider who will send a card/guide with instructions for using your particular meter.



Electricity meter (dial)



Electricity meter (digital)



Gas meter

Other electricity meters look like car milometers (middle photo). These are easier to read, and again, if a digit is ever in-between, look at the one to its right to work it out. This one reads 07576.

Gas

While *electricity* is measured in kWh, *gas* is measured in cubic metres or (like in the picture above), cubic feet. Gas bills use cubic meters but should explain how they've converted from cubic feet if that's what your meter uses. See other leaflet in this series: 'Reading your gas bill'.

Again, to read the meter, start on the left and note the digit that the pointer has just passed. If the pointer is directly above a number, you can tell if it has passed it or not by referring to the next dial. The meter above reads 7120. When reading a gas meter you should always end up with a four-digit number.

Find out more ...

Our advisors can help you with all energy-related queries

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



Tips for lower energy bills

Happy paying your gas and electricity supplier more money than you need to?

Thought not. Here are 15 ways to cut your bills ...

1) **Keep the oven door shut as much as possible;** every time you open it, nearly a quarter of the heat escapes.



2) **Give your clothes a day in the sun;** and give your tumble drier a break. Clothes dried in the fresh air feel great, and there are drying days in winter, too.

3) **Food in the oven cooks faster when the air inside flows freely,** so avoid putting foil on the racks.

4) **Don't leave your phone on charge all night.** It only needs a couple of hours – and don't leave the TV and other kit on stand-by.

5) **Be a friend to your freezer.** Defrost it regularly to help it run more efficiently.

6) **Catch 'em young.** Encourage your children to switch off electric toys and lights that they're not using. They'll soon get the hang of saving energy.



7) **Dodge the draft!** Fit draft-excluders to your front door, letter box and key hole, and draw your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.

8) **When boiling water, only fill the kettle with as much as you'll actually use** (but make sure you cover the metal element at the base).

9) **Buying a new TV, washing machine or dishwasher?** Look out for the energy saving logo, and remember: the bigger the TV, the more energy it'll use.



10) **Dimmer is smarter.** Use your dimmer switches to reduce the amount of energy used to light your room.

11) **Wait until you have a full load before putting on a wash.** Two half-loads use more energy (and water) than one full load.



12) **Sleep tight!** Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed, or use a low-wattage night light if you do need to leave one on.

13) **Turn your heating down by 1 degree.** You'll hardly notice the change in temperature, but it'll make a big difference to your heating bill.

14) **Put your fridge in a good spot.** Somewhere the air can circulate behind it, but not next to a cooker or radiator.

15) **New computer?** Remember a laptop typically uses around 85% less energy than a new desktop PC.

For free domestic energy advice, call **0800 512 012**
or go to **www.cse.org.uk/advice**



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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