



talk about your electricity bill

September 2009

Consumers in Alberta have a choice when it comes to the company they buy their electricity from. Each household can make a decision that suits their service and budget needs.

Electricity bills in Alberta are broken down into components. You have always paid for these components, but the line items have not always been shown. Before you make a decision on which company to buy your electricity from, find out what you are paying for.

Here's a look at the components of a typical residential Alberta electricity bill:

Meter reading: Estimated (E) or Actual (A)

Meter reading is done by your distribution company, which is not always the same as your retail or billing company. Meters are read at least every 60 days, but not necessarily monthly. Your bill will state whether the current charges are based on an estimate (E) of your consumption or an actual (A) meter reading.

You may also have the option of providing your own meter readings. Contact your distribution company to learn if they accept customer meter readings and if so, how to read your meter. Your distribution company will be listed on your electricity bill.

Energy charges

This is the cost of electric energy you have used in a billing period. These charges are expressed in cents per kilowatt-hour (¢/kWh).

The rate you are paying, in ¢/kWh, is the part of your bill that would be affected by a change in your retailer.

You can choose to buy electricity from a regulated or a competitive retailer. The regulated retailers offer the Regulated Rate Option (RRO), which changes month-to-month. The competitive retailers offer different products, including longer-term contracts. The Utilities Consumer Advocate offers information on what to know before making a choice at www.ucahelps.gov.ab.ca or by calling toll-free 310-4822.

Delivery charges

The delivery charge is the regulated cost of delivering electricity to consumers. Consumers have always paid for these costs. The high-voltage transmission and low-voltage distribution systems remain regulated and rates are approved by a regulative body.

Detailed delivery charges may be shown on your bill in one of two ways:

1. Described as distribution and transmission:

Distribution is the cost of building, operating and maintaining the local distribution system.

Transmission is the cost of building, operating and maintaining the provincial power grid.

2. Described as fixed and variable delivery charges:

A fixed delivery charge includes the costs of building and maintaining the local and provincial grids to deliver electricity to consumers regardless of consumption.



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A variable delivery charge includes the cost for the operation of the distribution and transmission systems based on the amount of energy consumed.

Administration charge

This fee covers the costs related to billing and customer service.

Credits

In January 2006, surplus funds began flowing back to Albertans from the sale of generation marketing rights from the Balancing Pool. This credit is paid back to consumers.

Local access fee

This is paid to your local government or band council to allow the utility access to land to construct, maintain and operate the distribution system serving the residents. The fee is determined by the local government or band council.

Rate rider(s)

A rider is a temporary credit or charge approved by the regulator. Riders occur when the actual costs incurred by a utility to provide electricity service to their customers is different from their approved rates.

Green power

This is a premium charge related to electricity produced from a renewable or an alternative energy source.

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

The five per cent GST calculation is based on the total costs in your bill, so will fluctuate based on your other charges. GST policy is set by the Government of Canada.

For more information about your options or electricity bill, visit www.ucahelps.gov.ab.ca or call toll-free 310-4822.

For questions about charges or line items on your bill, call your retailer/billing company. The company's name is on your bill.	Direct Energy	1-888-420-3181	www.directenergy.com
	ENMAX	310-2010 (toll-free in Alberta)	www.enmax.com
	EPCOR	310-4300 (toll-free in Alberta)	www.epcor.ca
	REAs (Rural Electrification Associations) Contact the Alberta Federation of REAs (AFREA) to obtain contact information for local REAs	780-417-3396 or 1-877-717-3496 (toll-free)	www.afrea.ab.ca
For questions about how rates are approved, call the regulator. If you aren't sure who the regulator is, call the Public Information Centre at 780-427-0265.	Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC)	780-427-4903 310-0000 (toll-free in Alberta)	www.auc.ab.ca
	REAs	780-417-3396 or 1-877-717-3496 (toll-free)	www.afrea.ab.ca
	Your municipal council	Check your local phone directory	