



ELECTRICITY
ASSOCIATION
OF IRELAND

YOUR ENERGY BILL GUIDE

Helping you to understand
your electricity bill, get
started with smart meters
and save money



Explanations of electricity terms

To get the best deal on your electricity, it helps to understand some of the key terms used by electricity suppliers in your bill. Here we explain some of them.

Electricity usage and kilowatt-hours (kWh)

This means how much electricity your home uses. It is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh). They are often called “units” on bills: 1 unit = 1 kWh.

How much electricity you use depends on:

- The size of your home
- How well it keeps in heat and is insulated
- The appliances you use and how efficient they are
- The number of people in your home

A typical Irish household uses 11.5 kWh of electricity per day. One kWh covers 10 minutes in an electric shower or one cycle of your washing machine or dishwasher.

Electricity rate or €/kWh

This is the price charged for each unit of electricity you use. It is measured in euro per kilowatt-hour (€/kWh).

Electricity tariff or plan (see page 10)

Your electricity tariff or plan outlines what you pay for your electricity. It sets:

- The cost per hour for each unit of electricity (kWh)
- Your daily standing charge (how much you pay per day to have the service)
- How long your contract lasts
- Any discounts or special benefits included

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Hedging

Hedging is when electricity suppliers buy electricity in advance at fixed prices. This protects customers from sudden price increases on the global market.

Smart meter

A smart meter gives automatic, accurate readings and allows you to use smart tariffs such as time-of-use. You may already have a smart meter installed in your home. To start using it, you must switch to a smart plan with your supplier.

Shifting your usage

This means using electricity at cheaper times, outside the peak time of 5pm–7pm.

Who's who in the electricity world?

Organisation	Role
ESBN	ESB Networks maintains and runs the electricity network.
EirGrid	EirGrid runs the national electricity grid.
SEMO	The Single Electricity Market Operator runs the wholesale electricity market.
GNI	Gas Networks Ireland manages Ireland's gas network.
CRU	The independent Commission for the Regulation of Utilities protects customers in the energy sector.
SEAI	The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland supports households, businesses, communities, and government to save energy and adopt renewable energy.

About this guide

This guide is designed to help customers understand their electricity bills.

We hope it gives you information and confidence to make informed choices about using electricity and managing your bills.

Inside, you'll find information to help you to:

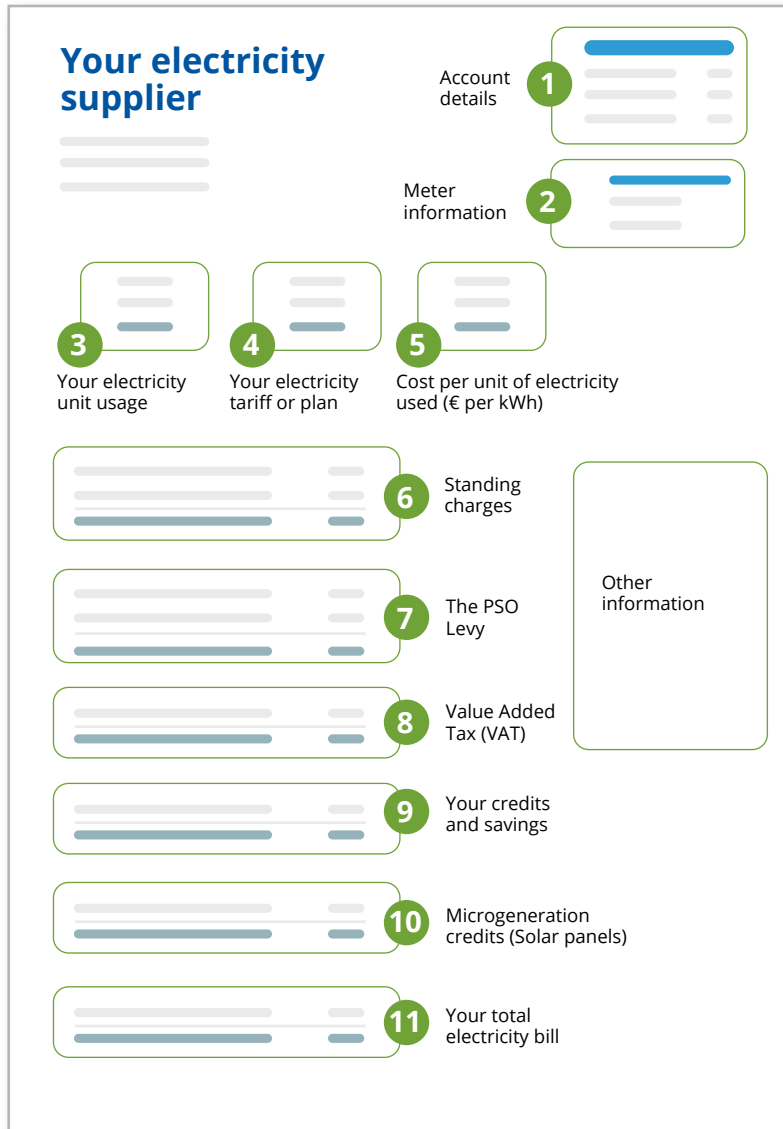
- Understand your electricity bill
- Get started with smart meters to understand how you are using electricity
- Manage your electricity costs through smarter electricity use and suitable tariffs
- Get support if you are struggling with your bills

Whether you are a new electricity customer or looking to find the best tariff (electricity plan with a supplier), we hope it helps you to save money, take control of your electricity use, and contribute to a sustainable Ireland.

The following electricity suppliers are members of the Electricity Association of Ireland (EAI) and have put this guide together.



Part 1: Understanding your electricity bill



1 Account details

Here you'll find your account number, your tariff or plan name, and your contract end date. If you're not currently in contract, a contract end date is not included.

2 Meter information

This shows your meter number and MPRN (Meter Point Reference Number). You need your MPRN if sending your supplier a meter reading.

3 Your electricity unit usage

Every year the average Irish household uses about:

- 4,200 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity
- 11,000 kWh of gas

Your electricity usage depends on things like:

- The size of your home
- How well it keeps in heat and is insulated
- The appliances you use and how efficient they are
- The number of people in your home.

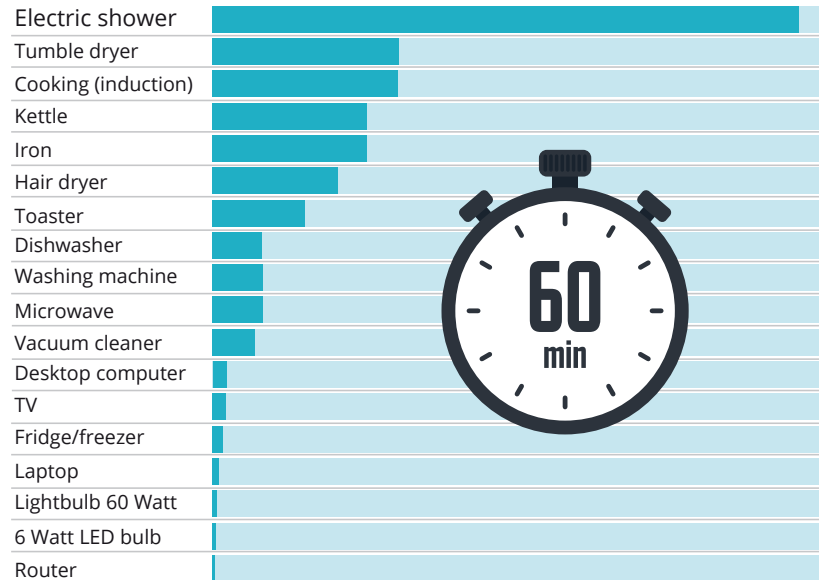


Tip: To keep your use of electricity as low as possible, you should know which appliances use the most electricity.

Remember, if it makes things hot, then it uses a lot of electricity. For example, showers, tumble dryers, ovens, washing machines and kettles.

In the image below, you can see the electricity different household appliances use per hour.

At the top, we have the highest users such as the electric shower and tumble dryer and at the bottom, the lowest users such as a light bulb or router for your internet.



Tip: Visit the website of the Sustainable Authority of Ireland, www.seai.ie, for advice to reduce your overall electricity costs.

Depending on your electricity tariff or plan, you can make additional savings by shifting your electricity use to different times of the day.

Can you put the washing machine and dishwasher on at night rather than at peak times? If so, a time-of-use tariff might be for you.

4 Your electricity tariff or plan

The unit price you pay per kWh depends on:

- Your electricity tariff or plan
- The time you use the electricity
- The mix of fuel used to generate the electricity. For example, is it a fossil fuel like coal or gas or renewable like solar or wind?

Your tariff decides how your electricity is charged per kWh. Below we outline some of the most popular electricity tariffs or plans. Different suppliers can have different names for tariffs.

Type of tariff or plan	Details
A standard flat-rate tariff	This is the same price no matter the time of day.
A day/night tariff (time-of-use tariff)	This offers different prices depending on the time of day. Daytime is 8am – 5pm and 7pm – 11pm Nighttime is 11pm to 8am. (This may vary with supplier.)
A smart meter plan	This plan has more options, with a time-of-use smart tariff offering different prices based on the time of day.
An electric vehicle (EV) plan	This provides an off-peak rate to charge your EV at home at certain hours of the day. (Peak being 5pm-7pm usually.)
Free weekend plans	Some suppliers offer free weekend plans. This is usually where you choose to have either Saturday or Sunday free of charge and a flat rate the rest of the week.

Tip: If you start using your smart meter and choose a time-of-use tariff, you can save money by using electricity when it is cheapest outside the peak times (5pm-7pm).



5 Cost per unit of electricity used (€ per kWh)

This pays for the generation of your electricity and the fuel used. To protect customers from sudden price increases on the global market, suppliers often buy electricity in advance. This is called “hedging”.

The cost per unit of electricity also includes charges that are set by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU). These costs help to:

- Maintain and upgrade the electricity network
- Make sure there is enough electricity to avoid blackouts (when electricity is unexpectedly cut off)
- Connect new homes and businesses to the electricity grid
- Run the electricity system energy market.

These charges are collected by electricity suppliers and are passed to EirGrid, ESBN and SEMO. The CRU ensures these charges are fair and transparent.

Tip: Your electricity charge is worked out with the following sum:

How much electricity you use in each billing period × rate for that period = your electricity charge

6 Standing charges

Standing charges apply even when you don't use electricity. This charge is applied for each day of the billing period. A billing period is generally about two months or 60 days. However, how often you are billed and the standing charge can vary among suppliers.

Supplier costs explainer

In the price you pay, suppliers include costs such as:

- Rent and wages
- Insurance
- Customer service
- Advertising and digital platforms
- Regulatory and policy obligations
- Bad debt (debt that is unlikely to be paid)
- A profit margin
- Financing costs.

7 The PSO Levy

The Public Service Obligation (PSO) Levy is a charge that pays for developing renewable energy. This reduces Ireland's use of fossil fuels (like coal and gas) that can rise and fall in price. It was introduced by the government in 2010.

8 Value Added Tax (VAT)

To help lower electricity costs, the government has reduced VAT on electricity from 13.5% to 9% until the end of 2030.

9 Your credits and savings

You can take advantage of supplier discounts for:

- Paying by direct debit
- Using online billing
- Loyalty rewards and vouchers.

Actual discounts and savings may vary depending on your supplier and tariff plan.

Tip: Check with your supplier to see what discounts you are eligible for. You can compare other providers to find the best deal on websites like [bonkers.ie](https://www.bonkers.ie) and [switcher.ie](https://www.switcher.ie).

10 Microgeneration credits (Solar panels)

If you have solar panels, you can take part in Ireland's Microgeneration Support Scheme. This lets you:

- Use your own solar energy to reduce the units of electricity you pay for and your bill.
- Sell surplus (extra) electricity you don't use back to the grid. You can earn up to €400 per year tax-free from these payments.

11 Your total electricity bill

Your total electricity bill is the total of all the parts above.

Can I change how often I am billed?

Electricity bills are usually sent every one to two months, depending on your supplier. If this doesn't suit, you can contact your supplier to arrange a way to pay that works better for you.

For example, you can choose:

- Monthly level payments to spread the costs evenly across the year
- Bi-monthly billing to pay for the electricity used over the previous two months
- A pay-as-you-go plan to pay for the energy as you use it. This is usually through a smart phone application or online account with your supplier.



Tip: Register for a smart plan with your supplier to access your smart meter data and start shifting your use.

What is a smart meter?

A smart meter is an electricity meter that automatically sends information about your electricity use to the ESBN. You may already have one installed in your home.

Smart meters come with many benefits including:

- Suppliers have less need for estimated bills and manual readings which saves time and is more accurate.
- Customers get detailed, real-time information about their electricity use. This information includes when you are using it and how much you are using.
- Customers have better control over their electricity use. You can shift your use to cheaper times if you are on a smart time-of-use energy plan.

Over two million smart meters are already installed in Irish homes.

Tip: You can register for an ESBN online account to access the data from your smart meter. This shows your electricity use and can help you to make informed decisions to save money.

Go to www.esbnetworks.ie/services/manage-my-meter/view-my-smart-meter-usage

How do I activate my smart meter?

Contact your supplier to find out if you have a smart meter installed.

If you already have a smart meter installed, your supplier can tell you about the available smart tariffs or plans.

The savings available to you depend on how much you can shift your electricity use away from peak times towards cheaper times of the day.

If you choose a smart tariff, your smart meter will be activated, and you can then see how much and when you are using your electricity. This will help you decide when it is best to use your electricity.

Most suppliers offer easy-to-use apps or online portals to help you track your use and manage your account.

Part 3: How to save money with time-of-use tariffs

What is a time-of-use (ToU) tariff and how does it work?

A time-of-use (ToU) tariff means the price of electricity varies depending on the time of day. You pay less when electricity demand across Ireland is lower like at night or weekends. But you pay more during busy daytime peak hours.

Here's a typical breakdown of a standard time-of-use tariff:

Night rate (Cheapest)

11pm – 8am (Monday to Sunday)

A great time for running dishwashers, washing machines, tumble dryers, or charging electric vehicles (EVs).

Day rate standard (Moderate cost)

8am – 5pm and 7pm – 11pm (Weekdays)

Try to reduce use during this time if you can.

Peak rate (Most expensive)

5pm – 7pm (Weekdays only)

Avoid using large appliances like ovens and electric showers if possible.

Tip: A time-of-use tariff could help you save money if you can:

- Set your appliances to work at night
- Charge your EV overnight
- Batch cook for the week ahead at less busy times rather than 5pm-7pm.

Tip: If you switch to a time-of-use tariff but find that you need to use a lot of electricity at peak times, it can work out as more expensive. Talk to your energy supplier to find the right electricity plan for you.

Part 4: How to manage your electricity bill with a smart meter

Support from supplier

Your electricity supplier plays a key role in helping you get the most from your smart meter and electricity plan. If you're not seeing savings, contact your supplier.

They may help you switch to a better plan or give you advice on how you are using electricity.

Your supplier can support you in the following ways:

- Show you how to get the most out of your smart meter
- Help you switch to a time-of-use (ToU) tariff
- Help you find the best plan based on your household's electricity use
- Offer you discounts like online billing, direct debit, or loyalty rewards
- Offer you environmentally friendly (green) electricity plans or advice on microgeneration such as solar panels.

There are several electricity suppliers in Ireland, so we suggest comparing plans often.

Most suppliers offer easy-to-use apps or online portals to help you check your use and manage your account.

Solar panels

If you install solar panels, you can take your savings even further:

- You reduce the amount of electricity that you pay for.
- You can sell surplus (extra) electricity back, earning up to €400 tax-free per year.

Improving your home's energy efficiency

Improving your home's energy efficiency is a great way to reduce your electricity bills and increase the comfort of your home. Your electricity supplier may also be able to help you with energy efficiency by providing:

- Advice including a BER (Building Energy Rating) assessment
- Information on grants
- Information on installing new windows, solar panels or other measures.

Part 5: Support if you are struggling with your bills

You can apply for many types of grants including towards solar panels from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). Check their website for more information.

Moving to a greener, fairer, sustainable energy future

Every small action contributes to a larger national goal: building a cleaner, more affordable, and more resilient energy system for everyone in Ireland. A portion of your bill helps pay for upgrades to the electricity grid and helps to build new ways to generate energy, especially renewables.

By moving to more environmentally friendly energy, as a country we can:

- Reduce carbon emissions (pollution) to fight climate change
- Increase efficiency, so we use less energy overall
- Lower long-term energy costs for homes and businesses
- Improve energy security, by relying more on local renewables like wind and solar
- Take control of our energy use and costs.

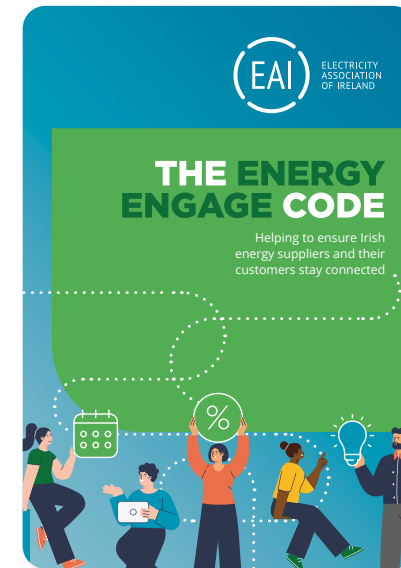
Smart meters, ToU tariffs, and microgeneration are key ways to help create a fairer, greener energy future and help us all save money on our electricity bills.



What should I do if I am falling behind with paying my electricity bills?

If you are struggling to pay your bills, don't ignore the problem. Reach out for help early.

- **Contact your electricity supplier:** Many offer payment plans, flexible options, or supports for customers facing difficulty.
- For more information on how your supplier can help you manage your electricity bill, you can read our **Energy Engage Code**. Search: eaireland.com/energyengagecode/
- The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) can also support you with debt and budgeting. Call them for free on 0818 07 2000.



How do I get started on using smart services?

	Action	What to do	Why it matters
1	Activate your smart meter and track your usage	Contact your electricity supplier to activate it. Register for an ESNB online account to access your smart meter data and view graphs of your energy use: https://www.esbnetworks.ie/services/manage-my-meter/view-my-smart-meter-usage	Learn when and how you use your electricity.
2	Choose a smart tariff	Ask your supplier about time-of-use (ToU) tariffs.	Save money by shifting energy use to cheaper times.
3	Try a smart flat tariff (optional)	If you're not ready for ToU, ask for a flat-rate smart plan.	Get insights into your energy use without committing to time-based pricing. Build confidence before switching.
4	Shift your energy use	Use appliances at night.	Maximise savings and ease pressure on the electricity grid.
5	Buy energy efficient appliances	Check energy labels when replacing old appliances.	A-rated products use less electricity and cost less to run.
6	Drive electric	Explore electric vehicle (EV) grants and support at https://www.seai.ie/	Lower fuel, tax, and maintenance costs; reduce emissions. Take advantage of EV tariff plans.
7	Save energy	Check out the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland for simple tips to save energy. For more information on smart energy visit: https://www.seai.ie/plan-your-energy-journey/for-your-home/smart-living	Reduce energy loss in your home.



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