

Gas and electricity

How to read the meters



If you want to keep track of your gas and electricity use, 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 meter, 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 (picture, 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.

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'. *And note that some dials in the row turn clockwise while others turn anti-clockwise.*

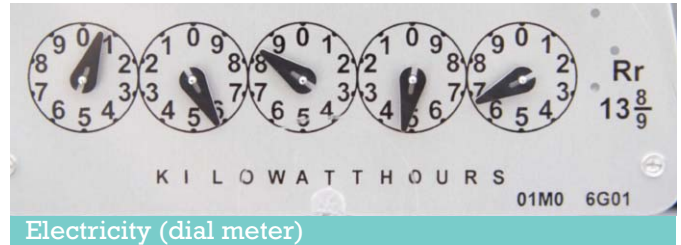
Sometimes a pointer may be directly above a number, so it is difficult to tell if it has passed it or hasn't quite reached it. If this is the case, look at the dial to its right. If that one shows a high number, then the pointer has **not** passed the digit that it is hovering above. If it shows a low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

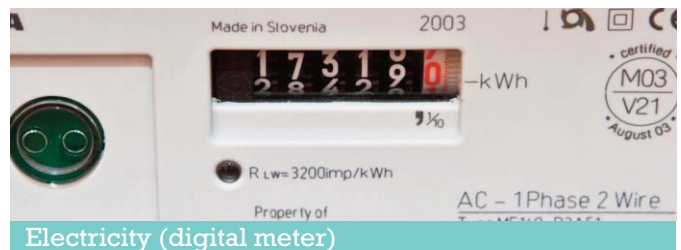
Other electricity meters look like car milometers (middle photo). These are easier to read, and again, if a digit is ever in-between, look at the one to its right to work it out. This one reads 17319.

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 (dial meter)



Electricity (digital meter)



Gas meter

Gas

While *electricity* is measured in kWh, *gas* is measured in cubic metres or cubic feet (like in the picture above). Gas bills use cubic metres (before, confusingly, converting this to kWh) but should explain how they've converted from cubic feet if that's what your meter uses. See the 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.

Gas and electricity meters show a cumulative total; they are not reset each time the meter is read



Turn over for energy saving tips ▶

Tips for lower energy bills

Happy paying your electricity and gas supplier more money than you need to? Thought not. Here are 10 ways to cut your bills ...

1) 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.



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



3) 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.

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

5) Buying a new washing machine, TV or dishwasher? Look out for the Energy Saving Trust logo.



6) Don't over-fill the kettle (but do make sure you cover the metal element at the base).



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

8) 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.

9) Wait 'til you have a full load before doing a wash. Two half-loads use more energy (and water) than one full load.

10) Sleep tight. Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed. If you want to light a child's room or a landing, use a low-wattage night light.



This leaflet is one of a series that covers a range of energy efficiency and renewable energy topics, produced by the Sustainable Energy Across the Common Space (SEACS) project, for you to view online or download to share in your community.

SEACS brought together three UK and two French local authorities – Devon County Council, Dorset County Council, Wiltshire Council, le Conseil Général des Côtes d'Armor and Lannion-Trégor Agglomération – to tackle the energy challenge that is faced on both sides of the channel.

The aim was to create opportunities for individuals, households, communities, schools and local authority buildings in both UK and France to reduce their energy consumption, implement energy efficiency measures and use clean/renewable energy where possible. The project has raised awareness of climate and energy issues and encouraged long term behavioural change towards energy use. Cooperation was the ethos of the project and participants had the opportunity to exchange and learn from each other.

For further information about SEACS project, to get ideas and view case studies to help you and your community save energy, and to find out which schools and community groups in your area have been involved, visit the SEACS website or the energy pages of your local authority's website.

www.seacs.info

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/sustainability

www.dorsetforyou.com/climatechange

www.devon.gov.uk/energy

This leaflet was first produced by the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) and reprinted in this version on behalf of SEACS.

CSE's Home Energy Team offers free advice on domestic energy use to householders in Bristol and Somerset (including the unitary authorities of North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset).

Call: 0800 082 2234 or 0117 934 1957

Email: home.energy@cse.org.uk

Web: www.cse.org.uk/loveyourhome

Facebook: www.facebook.com/EnergySavingAdvice

Twitter: www.twitter.com/@cse_homeenergy



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

0117 934 1400
www.cse.org.uk
info@cse.org.uk

Charity 298740

Founded 1979

We are a national charity that helps people change the way they think and act on energy