

Meters measure the amount of energy that is used in your home or business. There are different types of meters:

- Accumulation meters
- Interval meters
- Pre-payment meters

The distributor owns the meter. The distributor provides information from the meter to the retailer so the retailer can bill the customer.



## Accumulation meters

Accumulation meters show the total amount of energy consumed. Usually a distributor visits your property every two or three months to read the meter.

Total consumption for the bill is worked out by taking the current meter reading and subtracting the previous meter reading. The result is the total amount of energy you have used since the last meter reading.

All gas customers have accumulation meters.

Most electricity customers have an accumulation meter, but interval meters are becoming more common.

## Interval meters

Interval meters record energy consumption every 30 minutes. The intervals are read manually once every two to three months (when the meter reader visits the property) or the information can be downloaded to a computer by the distributor using a modem.

Interval meters are used when customers pay different amounts for electricity at different times of the day. For example, a customer may pay more for electricity in the afternoon 'peak' period. The time periods are called 'blocks'.

If a customer has an interval meter, the bill will include the total energy consumed for each block.

Contestable customers who want to transfer to a new retailer must use an interval meter.

There may be a charge to change from an accumulation meter to an interval meter.

## Pre-payment meters

A pre-payment meter allows a customer to pay for energy before using it, similar to a pre-paid mobile phone.

Pre-payment meters are only available to electricity customers in areas that have been agreed to by the Minister for Energy.

Special protection is available to people who use pre-payment meters under part 9 of the *Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers*. For more information on the Code and where to find it, see sheet #12.

## Reading your meter

Accumulation meters are usually read by the distributor but sometimes by the customer.

All accumulation meters must be read by the distributor at least once a year. Interval meters will always be read by your distributor.

If you do not provide access to your meter (e.g. there is a locked gate), or you do not fill in and send back the meter reading form (if you read your own meter), the distributor will not have a meter reading for your property. If this happens, the distributor will estimate your energy use and provide this estimate to your retailer. This means that your next bill will be based on an estimation only (see sheet #6 for more information on bills).

## Testing the meter

You can ask for a meter test. If the meter is faulty then this test will be at no cost. If you ask for a meter test and the meter is not faulty, you will have to pay for the cost of the test.

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