

A retailer will bill you for the energy that you have used, based upon the meter reading or estimate received from the distributor.

You must be sent a bill at least once every three months, and no more than once a month. You may ask for bills to be sent more or less often, but a retailer does not have to agree to this.

If you have received a reminder notice for the last three bills, the retailer can decide to send a bill more often than once a month.

You pay a fee each day for being connected to the network, whether you use any energy or not. This is called the 'fixed charge' or 'supply charge'.

Some of the things a bill must include are:

- the amount of energy that you have consumed over a set period of time;
- any concessions or rebates received;
- the amount owing;
- when the bill must be paid; and
- who to contact for billing or payment inquiries.



Estimated bills

If your retailer does not receive a meter reading from the distributor, your bill will be based on an estimate provided by the distributor. Your bill must show if it is based on an estimation.

If you receive an estimated bill, you can contact your retailer who is required to explain to you why and how the bill has been estimated.

If your retailer bases a bill upon an estimate and later receives a meter reading, an adjustment on your next bill must be made to take account of the actual meter reading.

A retailer must issue a bill based on an actual meter read at least once every 12 months.

TIP!

To avoid estimated bills, ensure your distributor has access to your meter – or ensure that you send back your meter reading form on time!

Review of a bill

You can ask a retailer to review a bill but the retailer only has to review the bill if you pay whichever amount is less of:

- the part of the bill that is not in dispute; or
- an amount equal to your average bill for the last 12 months.

A retailer must tell you the outcome of the review within 20 business days, or sooner if possible.

Payments

A retailer must give you at least 12 business days to pay a bill and must provide a number of payment options.

Payment options are:

- in person at a payment outlet;
- mail;
- Centrepay (for residential customers only);
- electronically using BPay (electricity) or a credit card;
- telephone using a credit card or debit card (gas).

You can make advance payments towards a future bill. The retailer can require these payments be over a minimum amount.

If you have been overcharged, your retailer must ask you if you want a refund or credit for your next bill, if the amount is more than \$45. If the amount is less than \$45, your retailer can choose whether to refund you or give you a credit for your next bill.

If you have underpaid an account, the retailer may ask you to pay the amount owing. If you underpaid because of a mistake by the retailer or distributor, the retailer can only ask for money owed for the last 12 months.

Late payment fees

Retailers can charge a late payment fee if you don't pay your bill by the due date.

There are limits on how late payment fees can be charged:

- If you have made a complaint about a bill, a late payment fee should not be charged.
- If you have been assessed as being in financial hardship, a late payment should not be charged.
- If you receive a concession, you cannot be charged a late payment fee for the first two reminder notices you receive each year.
- You should not receive more than two (electricity) or three (gas) late payment fees for the same bill.
- You should not receive more than 12 in one year.

In addition to a late payment fee, interest may be charged on overdue bills.

IMPORTANT!

If you are having problems paying a bill - contact your retailer before the due date to make a payment arrangement.

Disclaimer The Economic Regulation Authority has compiled this document in good faith. It is not a substitute for legal advice and no person nor organisation should act on the basis of any matter it contains without first obtaining appropriate professional advice. The Economic Regulation Authority and its employees make no representation or warranty, expressed or implied, as to the accuracy, completeness, reasonableness or reliability of the information contained in this document, and, subject to law, accept no liability for any loss arising directly or indirectly from making available this document. The summaries of any legislation or regulations in this document do not describe or identify all material terms of those laws or to exhaustively identify and describe the rights, obligations and liabilities of any person under those laws.