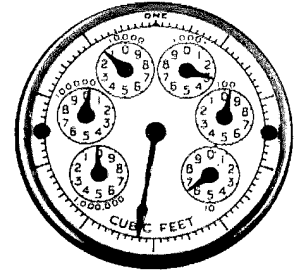


Does Your Energy Bill Seem High?

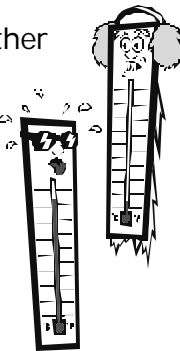
Here are some basic items to check when your electric usage is higher than normal:



- 1 Check your electric meter to see if the dial is spinning.
- 2 Shut all breakers off at the panel box. See if your meter dial stops spinning. It should.
- 3 Turn breakers on one by one and see which one starts the meter dial moving. Then see what the breaker controls (hot water, freezer, etc.). This will give you an idea of what is using electricity in your home.
- 4 Read your meter each day at the same time for three or four days. This will show how many kilowatt-hours you use per day.

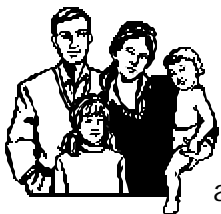
There are a number of reasons your bill could be higher than you expect:

Weather. A long spell of cold weather increases most energy bills. The same goes for hot weather if you have air conditioning or use several fans. Consider our **Budget Payment Plan** to even out high seasonal bills.



Vacation/extended absence. You've been away, but your bill didn't go down. If you're wondering why, read more in the attached *Energy Consumption in an Empty Home* article.

Increased use in your household. If you have a new baby, live-in relatives, tenants or houseguests in your household, you can expect higher energy use.



Change in lifestyle. Have you added a home office or been keeping the house warmer? Perhaps you've bought a spa or a hot tub for leisurely soaks, or you now have teenagers taking more showers. All of these lifestyle changes contribute to higher energy use.

Home renovations or additions. You'll use more energy to heat and run your home during renovations and by adding floor and window space. If you made energy improvements, but your bill still went up, chances are that the consumption savings were more than offset by increased gas costs. Check the actual unit consumption, and if it has gone down, then you have saved over what you would have spent otherwise.



Longer-than-usual billing period. It may be that your energy consumption isn't actually higher than usual, but that your bill covers a longer period of time. Compare this bill with previous bills. The meter reading information on your bill shows the number of days in the billing period and compares this year's daily average consumption against last year's.

Extra appliance use. You may have added new appliances like a computer or breadmaker, or have been using them more.

Other possible factors:

Electric heat. Some thermostats will only set the heat back to 55 degrees even though it may appear "off." The heat will come on when the temperature is lower than 55 degrees. Colder than normal weather will cause your heat to be on more.

Extra electric heating or portable space heaters, particularly in winter. A 1500-watt heater costs 9 cents an hour, or over \$2 a day if it's running all the time.

Forced air systems. Make sure the filter and return air grill are clean. The ductwork may need insulation and sealing. Crossover ducts in mobile homes may be disconnected.



Does your home need "weatherizing"? Ceiling, floors, and walls may need more insulation. What about weather-stripping or caulking around doors, windows, pipes, and cracks?

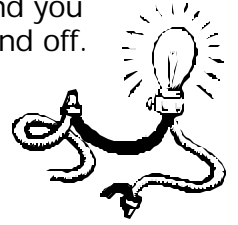
Inaccurate thermostat. Make sure your home-heating thermostat is properly calibrated. The higher the setting, the more energy used. If you aren't paying attention to turning down the thermostat at night or when no one is home, you're using more energy than you need to. Digital thermostats may lose their programmed settings when the power goes off.

Water heaters. If you don't have an efficient newer model water heater you can be using more electricity than necessary. If an element is burned out or sediment has built up inside the tank, your usage can be high.



Water leaks. Water leaks in pipes, especially hot water leaks, can cause your water pump and water heater to operate more than normal.

Water pumps. If your pressure tank becomes water logged it will cause your pump to run. Usually the pump house is a distance away from your house and you won't hear the pump cycling on and off.



Extended winter lighting requirements. Did you put up holiday lights? As the days are shorter, lights are on for longer periods of time in the winter. If you use outdoor security lights that stay on all night, consider putting them on motion sensors to come on only when needed.

Did you know?

On average, about 50% of home energy use is for space heating, 30% for water heating, 15% for lighting, and appliances the remaining 5%.

Is your neighbor's bill lower? No two homes are alike, and no two households have exactly the same energy-using patterns. Your house's energy use depends on things like the type of heating system and how the house is constructed. Even for two identically built houses, the occupants will have different lifestyles, appliances and energy-using (or saving) habits.

Energy Savings Information:

www.eren.doe.gov/consumerinfo/energy_savers
www.epa.gov/hhiptool
www.energystar.gov

**To Request a Free
Energy Savers Booklet
Call 857-1530**

Peninsula Light Co.
a mutual corporation

P.O. BOX 78 • 13315 GOODNOUGH DR NW • GIG HARBOR • WA • 98335-0078
PHONE (253) 857-5950 • FAX (253) 857-1558 • www.penlight.org