

# UTILI-FACTS

## Paying your electric bill

Pay your electric bill by the due date. Your due date must be no earlier than 16 days from the date of the bill or the postmark on the envelope. The payment is deemed late if received after the due date. If you do not receive a bill, call your electric provider immediately.

What your bill must show:

- Billing period
- Amount due
- Payments made since last bill
- Toll-free number for billing questions
- Toll-free number for outage report
- Kilowatt-hour (kWh) reading
- Kilowatt-hour (kWh) total
- Note if billed usage is based on estimated usage

### What if I can't pay the entire bill?

Call your provider to make payment arrangements, get on level or average payment plan, or enter into a deferred payment plan.

1) Payment Arrangements – an agreement between the REP and a customer that allows the customer to pay the outstanding bill after the due date, but before the due date of the next bill.

2) Level and Average Payment - plans that offer bills that are about the same each month.

3) Deferred Payment Plan – an agreement between the REP and the customer that allows the customer to pay an outstanding balance in installments that go beyond the due date of the current bill.

You may be eligible for a deferred payment plan if you:

- are officially designated as a Critical Care or Chronic Condition Residential Customer
- have expressed an inability to pay and have not been disconnected during the preceding 12 months
- have not submitted more than 2 payments during the 12 months that were found to have insufficient funds available
- have received service from the REP for less than three months and you lack: sufficient credit or satisfactory payment history for electric service from a previous REP or utility.
- In a deferred payment plan the beginning payment amount may be no greater than 50% of the amount due depending on your REP. The remaining deferred payment amount will be paid in equal installments over at least five billing cycles unless the customer agrees to

fewer installments.

Depending on your REP, you may be required to enter into a switch-hold as a condition of entering into a deferred payment plan. A switch-hold means that you will not be able to buy electricity from other companies until you pay this past due amount. The switch-hold will be removed after your final payment on this past due amount is processed. While a switch-hold applies, if you are disconnected for not paying you will need to pay your REP to get your electricity turned back on.

Electric customers may inquire about level billing programs or average payment plans, which offer bills that are about the same each month, making budgeting easier. All customers who are not currently delinquent in paying their electric bills are eligible. If the customer is delinquent in payment when the level or average payment plan is established, the REP may require the customer to pay no greater than 50% of the delinquent amount due.

The REP may require the remaining delinquent amount to be paid by the customer in equal installments over at least five billing cycles unless the customer agrees to fewer installments or may include the remaining delinquent amount in the calculation of the level or average payment amount. Depending on your REP, if you are delinquent in payment when a level or average payment plan is entered into, you may be required to enter into a switch-hold as a condition of entering into the plan.

### What if I have been overcharged?

- Pay the undisputed portion of your bill or pay the entire bill under protest
- Ask the utility to investigate the disputed amount. The Public Utility Commission requires that the utility report its findings to you within 15 days.
- Be specific in providing information about your concern, such as an incorrect meter reading, a misapplied rate, or an already paid past-due balance.
- If you think the investigation finding is incorrect, you may file a complaint with the Public Utility Commission.
- Overcharges must be refunded within three billing cycles or interest must be paid to the customer.

More importantly, read your bill so that you understand all of the charges. If you don't understand something, contact your electric provider or call the Public Utility Commission.

### QUESTIONS:

Call: 1-888-782-8477, in Austin 512-936-7120  
(TTY 512-936-7136) (FAX 512-936-7003)

Write: PUC - Consumer Protection Division  
P.O. Box 13326, Austin, TX 78711-3326

Online: <http://www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/complaint/Complaint.aspx>

