



BACKBILLING

Information and rules about backbilling

This fact sheet outlines the most common reasons customers receive backbills and explains the different rules that apply to energy and water backbilling.

Reasons for backbilling

If you haven't been billed for all of the electricity, gas or water you've used, the company can send you a backbill, also known as a catch-up bill.

Why might this happen?

- Your company may have had some problems with its billing process and has not been able to issue you with a bill for some time.
- Your last bill, or last few bills, may have been estimated and the estimate was found to be less than what you actually used.
- There was an error in a previous bill.
- Your company may not have been able to access your meter to read it.
- Your last bill may have been based on an incorrect meter reading.
- There may have been a problem with the reading process for your Smart Meter, solar bi-directional meter or interval meter. These meters are generally read via a communications network and automatically send your usage data to your electricity company. Sometimes the readings can occur by a meter reader using a handheld computer.



If your reading has been estimated, it must say so on your bill.

Rules about backbilling

Energy

If the company that issues your bills was at fault, it can send you a backbill for energy you've used. But, it can't go back any further than **nine months** — even if that means some of your usage isn't billed.

Importantly, you must be offered **equal time** to pay, up to 12 months. So, if the backbill is for six months, you must get six months to pay for it.

It's also important to understand when these restrictions on backbilling don't apply e.g. if the company has asked for meter access and this has been denied, then it may be able to issue a backbill for the entire period since the meter was last read.

The rules about backbilling in Victoria by energy companies are set out in the [Energy Retail Code](#).

You can get a copy of the code from the Essential Services Commission's website:
<http://ow.ly/jNOt3011F8A>

Note: The [Energy Retail Code](#), including the backbilling provisions, only applies to customers who use less than 40MWh of electricity or 1,000GJ of gas per year.

Water

Water corporations can backbill for up to 12 months. It doesn't matter who is at fault. Water corporations must provide **equal time** to pay the backbill.

The rules about backbilling by water companies are set out in the [Urban Water Customer Service Code](#) and in the [Rural Water Customer Service Code](#).

You can get a copy of the codes from the Essential Services Commission's website:
<http://ow.ly/6D7J3011Fy5>