



MOVING IN AND OUT OF A PROPERTY

Information for Victorian energy and water customers

This fact sheet explains what to do to get your energy and water accounts set-up and closed when moving in and out of a property

Moving in

It's important to set up your electricity, gas and water accounts well in advance of moving into a new property. Generally, energy and water companies need at least **two business days** notice before you move, so that meter reads and energisation (if applicable) can be arranged. If the electricity or gas is on when you move in, and you don't set up your energy accounts, you will be placed onto the 'standard tariffs' which are generally more expensive than other energy offers available. Also, you'll receive letters and/or bills from the energy company that supplied the previous occupant—**don't ignore these letters**. There's important information about Dear Occupier letters later in this fact sheet. To have electricity connected, make sure the mains switch is in the 'off' position.

'Dear Occupier' letters and bills

If the energy retailer you signed up with doesn't successfully win the right to bill you, known as the 'billing rights' to your meter, the retailer that billed the last occupant of your property will start to send out letters and/or bills to your property addressed 'to the occupier' or 'dear occupier'.

It's important to open these letters and contact the retailer as soon as possible to explain the situation. It's also important to contact your preferred retailer so that it can work on getting the billing rights to your meter.

What happens if 'Dear Occupier' letters are ignored

If you do not contact the retailer sending the 'dear occupier' letters, and provide 'acceptable identification' (a customer requirement under the [Energy Retail Code](#)), then the retailer can disconnect supply and start debt collection activity. If your electricity or gas has been disconnected, or your water supply restricted, read more in [Fact Sheet 8: Disconnection restriction for debt](#).

Units and apartments: bulk hot water

If you're moving into a block of units or an apartment building, the hot water might be supplied through a 'bulk hot water' system. Generally, you will need an account for this too. However, you cannot choose the retailer. Read more in [Fact Sheet 25: Bulk Hot Water](#).

Utility Connection Services

When you move into a new property, you may be offered to have the utilities connected by a 'utility connection service'. Some companies provide this service, which may be convenient for some people. However, they do not necessarily compare all available offers. It's worthwhile to do your own research to find an energy plan that suits your needs and budget.

Comparing energy offers and finding your water company

It's a good idea to shop around for an energy offer that best suits you. The rates charged by retailers differ depending on where you live, so a competitive offer with a retailer in a certain area might not be as competitive in another location with the same retailer. Always read your energy contract to confirm the details and rates are correct. You can't pick your water company. To find your local water company, visit: <http://ow.ly/10DGA1>

Some energy offers include discounts, but these discounts may apply to the usage or to the total of the bill (including Service to Property (STP) charges). It's important to check you have the best offer. Also, STP charges may be different for each retailer. An STP charge is a flat fee for each property - it's charged for accessing and maintaining the electricity and gas network. It's not based on how much electricity or gas is used at the property and it will be shown on the bill separately.

We recommend Victorian Energy Compare, the independent energy price comparison website. It's free and provides users with the generally available offers for residential and small business customers. compare.switchon.vic.gov.au



Transfers—what can go wrong

Sometimes there are problems with the transfer of your account from your old property to your new property, or with establishing a new account with a new retailer. Some of the common issues include:

- A delay with the transfer.
- The wrong meter is transferred.
- A disconnection of your supply on the wrong date.
- Being billed for a time when you didn't occupy the property.

Under the [Energy Retail Code](#), if your electricity or gas transfer is delayed, your retailer is required to advise you within five days of becoming aware the transfer has not occurred.

Sometimes the wrong meter is transferred (usually your neighbour's meter). This is more common in new housing developments (where your house might be known by a 'lot number' in the national database), for semi-detached properties (for example, number 1 and 1A), and for apartments and units. If you can, find your electricity, gas or water meter and take a photo of the meter number or write it down. Give this meter number to your energy or water company.

If the national database has your address and/or meter number recorded incorrectly, you will need to send a copy of your property's council rates notice to your retailer so that it can request for the database to be updated with the correct details.

Retrospective transfers

Generally, it is possible for your preferred retailer to retrospectively win the billing rights to your meter—that means it will bill you from the date you moved in or the closest date to when you moved in. This depends on a few conditions including the available meter reads. Retrospective transfers are limited to **118 business days for gas** and **130 business days for electricity**. This will result in your account being backbilled by your preferred retailer to the date it obtains billing rights. If you can't pay all at once, ask for an affordable payment plan.

If your preferred retailer cannot retrospectively transfer your account, ask for a transfer to happen as soon as possible (there may be a fee for this). Also, you will need to pay the retailer that sent the 'dear occupier' bills. If you can't afford to pay it all at once, ask for an affordable payment plan.

It's also recommended that you ask the retailer sending the 'dear occupier' bills/letters to stop any credit collection or disconnection activity while your preferred retailer obtains the rights to bill your electricity or gas meter/s.

Billed for energy or water charges before you moved in?

If you receive a bill which includes charges for dates before you actually moved in, contact the company to advise the date you moved in. You may need to provide a copy of your lease agreement (if you're a tenant) or copy of your settlement paperwork (if you're the owner) to confirm the date you became liable for the energy and water charges.

Moving out

It's best to give as much notice as possible to your energy and water companies to arrange the final meter reads and disconnection of supply (if applicable). As a minimum, you must give at least two business days notice. If you don't organise the final reads before moving out, you may be billed past your move out date. Give your companies your forwarding mailing address so you receive the final bills. If you don't receive the final bills within a couple of weeks of moving out, ring the companies to follow this up as sometimes things go wrong with finalising accounts. Issues with finalising accounts could result in debt collection activity or credit default listing.

Checklist

Don't know where to start? This checklist may help.

Tips for moving in and out:

- Give your energy and water companies plenty of notice when moving in or out.
- Shop around for an energy offer that suits your needs using Victorian Energy Compare. Always check your contract.
- Talk to your preferred electricity or gas retailer if there has been an issue or delay setting up your new account/s.
- Don't ignore 'dear occupier' letters/bills and call the company to find out why you have been sent them.
- Take notes of your contact with the companies, including the details of who you spoke to, the time and date, and information about what was discussed and any agreements made (including dates).

Contacting EWOV:

- If you can't sort out the problem with your electricity or gas retailer directly, contact EWOV.
- Have **all your details ready**, including bills, 'dear occupier' letters, and your own notes.