

Estimated bills

Information for Victorian electricity, gas and water customers

Estimated bills are issued when no actual meter read has been obtained from your meter.
→ *Depending on your meter you may be able to submit a self-meter read if this occurs.*

Meter reads

How often is the meter read?

Electricity and gas:

Every 3 months (or at least once every 12 months).

Water:

Every 3 months (or at least once every 12 months).

Most electricity customers will have smart meters that do not require physical meter readings – your usage information is sent remotely to the retailer.

Gas and water meters are still read in person.

Sometimes a meter can't be read.

The most common reason is because of an access issue, such as:

- Secure premises with locked gates
- Dog(s) preventing access
- The meter being located in an inaccessible place (e.g. locked indoors).
- If there is a problem with part of the interval data collected by smart meters.

What are my responsibilities?

You have a duty to provide safe, convenient and unhindered access to a meter.

If you don't allow access for 3 consecutive meter readings, your **energy** supply may be disconnected.

Electricity and gas customers that don't feel comfortable leaving a property unsecured for a meter reader can buy a *Victorian Power Industry Lock* from some hardware shops. The meter reader will have a master key for this lock – remember to notify your retailer that you have one installed.

(Water companies do not use these).

Estimated bills

You may be issued with an estimated bill if your meter wasn't read. **If a bill has been estimated it must say so on the bill.** This may appear as the letter 'e' or the word 'estimated' next to the usage charge.

An estimated bill is likely to be either above or below your usage. If it is above your usage, you are paying more than you should and will be credited on your next bill.

If it is below your usage, you will get a backbill at some stage. Energy retailers can backbill up to 9 months prior, and water corporations up to 12 months prior which may be an expensive surprise. You are better off getting an actual bill, rather than an estimate.

See our factsheet – ['Backbilling, refunds and lost payments'](#) – for more information.

How are bills estimated?

Your energy retailer or water company can estimate your bill based on your previous usage.

If they don't have this information, the estimate will be based on average usage across a class of customers.

To avoid an estimated bill, you may be able to provide a reading of your own meter to your energy retailer or water company.

Self meter reads (energy)

If you have an accumulation (flat-rate) gas or electricity meter you can submit a self-meter read **before the due date** of your estimated bill. Your retailer will tell you how to do this when you receive an estimated bill – for example, taking a photograph of the meter and sending it to them. **This does not apply to customers with smart meters.**

Self meter reads (water)

Water companies may request self-meter reads for estimated bills, and some allow you to submit a self-read online. Contact your water company to see if this is an option.

NEED FURTHER HELP? If you receive an estimated bill and need assistance, first contact your energy retailer or water company. If you're not happy with their response, contact EWOV – we're here to help!

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Translating and Interpreting Service: 131 450
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