



# Electricity, gas and water meters explained

## USE THIS FACT SHEET IF YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT:

- meter identifiers
- finding your meter
- who reads your meter
- giving access to your meter
- reading meters
- calculating usage



This fact sheet will help explain the different types of meters, how to read them and you and your retailer's responsibilities.

### METER IDENTIFIERS

If you change electricity or gas retailers, your meter identifier number is used to help transfer your account. You can find your meter identifier number on your electricity, gas or water bill.

Electricity – National Meter Identifier (NMI)

Gas – Meter Installation Reference Number (MIRN)

Water – meter serial number

### WHERE IS MY METER?

Electricity and gas meters are often located on the front of buildings, the back of a building inside the property's fence line, or even inside some older houses.

Water meters are usually found in the ground at the front of your property, near the boundary line.

If you live in a unit complex, it is likely that all of the meters are located in one central location. In some older unit blocks there may only be one meter for the property and the body corporate or landlord may determine how the usage is charged to residents.

### WHO READS MY METER?

Your energy and water distributor (the companies that own the poles, wires, pipes and meters), or their representative, read your meter and provide this to your retailer for billing.

Distributors must use their best endeavours to read meters at least once every 12 months but they are generally read every three months. However, your retailer has the right to estimate your usage if the meter is not read.

Distributors and their representatives must also comply with legislative requirements when accessing your property, carry or wear official identification and show their ID if requested.

### ACCESS TO YOUR METER

You must provide safe and clear access to your meter for maintenance, meter readings and connecting or disconnecting supply. If you live within a secure complex, your distributor will have access arrangements with the complex manager.

If you cannot provide access to your meter (due to a locked gate, unsecured dog, or other obstruction) your retailer has the right to estimate your bill. If access to the meter continues to be denied, your retailer has the right to disconnect or restrict supply.

To avoid this, contact your retailer to find out what other arrangements can be made. Options may include self-reads, move the meter to the fence line, or organise a special meter read.

## HOW DO I READ MY METER?

It's a good idea to read your meter when you move into a premise, and again when you leave, to ensure you don't pay for other occupants' usage. You can also read meters to check for gas and water leaks.



### Dial meters

Stand directly in front of the meter so you can see the exact position of the pointer on each of the five dials. Record the numbers from each dial (from left to right). If a pointer is sitting between two numbers on a dial, record the lowest number. For example, the reading from the dials pictured is 44464.



### Odometer meters

Record the numbers from left to right (but ignore the red numbers on gas meters).



### Digital meters

These show the total usage for the billing period.



### Water meters

There are many types of water meters but all have a combination of black and red numbers and/or dials.

Record all the black numbers and only the first three red numbers or dials. Numbers are read from left to right, while dials are read in a clockwise direction.

## CALCULATING USAGE

Your energy or water usage is measured by calculating the difference between your 'start read' and the 'end read'. For example, if you move into a premise and the meter shows 18525 (the start read) and at the end of the billing period it shows 24976 (the end read), your electricity usage would be 6451 kilowatt hours (24976 – 18525 = 6451).

## TIPS FOR RESOLVING COMPLAINTS

- 1 If you have any problems with your energy or water company, contact them first and explain your situation. Keep records of letters, names, times and dates.
- 2 If the call centre staff can't help you, ask to speak to a supervisor.
- 3 If the problem is still not fixed, contact EWOQ to make a complaint.

## ABOUT EWOQ

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) is a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service for residential and small business energy customers across Queensland and water customers in south east Queensland.

