



energy+water
ombudsman
QUEENSLAND

Understanding your energy & water bills

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland can help.

PAYING YOUR BILL

It is your responsibility to pay, on time, for the energy and water you've consumed or you may face disconnection. By law, water cannot be disconnected but flow can be severely restricted if you don't pay your bill.

If you are having trouble paying your bill, contact your retailer immediately to find out what assistance they can provide to avoid disconnection/restriction. If you wait until you have been disconnected/restricted to contact your retailer, you may be required to pay a fee, security deposit and the balance of your bill before supply is restored.

PAYMENT OPTIONS

Most retailers offer customers different ways to pay their bill (e.g. Bpay, direct debit, Centrepay, credit card, or at the post office). However you may be charged for paying a certain way. Check with your retailer.

REBATES

Rebates are available to pensioners, people who rely on electricity to manage medical conditions, and those who require emergency financial assistance. Contact your energy or water retailer to find out more and to set up your rebate.

DISPUTED BILLS

If you believe your bill is unusually high because your retailer has made an error, you can ask them to explain why or to carry out a full investigation.

The Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland is here to help resolve complaints with your energy supplier across Queensland or water supplier in south east Queensland.

FREECALL 1800 662 837

INTERPRETER 131 450

TTY/VOICE 133 677

EMAIL complaints@ewoq.com.au

WEB www.ewoq.com.au

MAIL PO Box 3640
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LOCATIONS

Brisbane – Level 16, 53 Albert Street

Rockhampton – Level 2, 209 Bolsover Street

Cairns – Level 1, 15 Lake Street

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HOW OFTEN SHOULD I RECEIVE A BILL?

Under the National Energy Retail Rules, your energy retailer must send you a bill at least once every three months. Depending on your contract and payment options, you may get your bill monthly.

Under the Water and Sewerage Services Code you must receive your water bill at least quarterly.

WHAT ARE ALL THESE THINGS LISTED ON MY BILL?

Each retailer has a different way of displaying the information, but by law the following must be included on your bill:

- The dates of the billing period and the estimated date of your next scheduled meter reading.
- Whether the bill is based on an actual meter reading or is estimated.
- The total amount of electricity, gas or water consumed.
- The relevant fees, charges and tariffs applicable to you.
- The due date for payment and a list of payment options.
- A telephone number for billing, payment enquiries and payment plan options.
- A telephone number for supply issues, faults or emergencies.
- Your name, property address, billing address (if different), account number and meter identifier number.
- If you are in credit or in arrears, the amount.
- Advice on how to access interpreter services.
- Advice on the availability of concessions you may be entitled to.

WHAT ARE ALL THE DIFFERENT FEES AND CHARGES ON MY BILL?

There are a number of other fees and charges that can make up the cost of your bill:

- service/network charges (for the delivery of energy and water and the maintenance of the poles, wires and pipelines)
- bulk water charge
- fixed water and sewerage access charges
- cancellation/termination charges
- security deposits
- late payment fees
- restriction penalties
- disconnection penalties and reconnection charges
- special meter reading fees
- credit card processing fees.



If you have not negotiated a contract with your energy retailer you are most likely on a standard retail contract.

You have a right to be supplied energy on a standard retail contract and are under no obligation to sign a market contract.

Market contracts are an agreement between you and your energy retailer. Market contract prices are set by energy retailers and are not regulated.

WHAT IS AN ESTIMATED BILL AND WHY DO I HAVE ONE?

An estimated bill means that your energy or water retailer has estimated the amount of energy or water you have used for the quarter, based on the same quarter the previous year. Estimated bills are issued if the energy or water distributor was unable to safely access your meter due to a locked gate, unsecured dog or other obstruction. You will continue to receive estimated bills until it is safe for the distributor to access your meter.

IS THERE A PROBLEM WITH RECEIVING AN ESTIMATED BILL?

While it might sound good if your bill is underestimated, the next time your distributor is able to take an actual reading, you could be sent a 'back bill' for a substantial amount of money. If your bill is over estimated, you will be paying for more than you actually used until an actual reading is taken and you could find your account is in credit.

WHAT IS A BILL ADJUSTMENT?

If there is an error with your meter reading or charges on your account, your energy or water company is able to backbill you by issuing an adjustment notice. While the adjustment notice can cover any length of time (for example, two years' worth of corrections) your energy company can only bill you for the nine months before the date of the adjustment notice. However, if you don't allow access to the meter and you receive an adjustment notice, there is no limit on the length of time the retailer can backbill you. Water companies have no backbilling time restrictions.

If you receive a backbill for your energy account, you are entitled to request a payment extension equivalent to the period of time covered by the backbill. If you receive a backbill from your water company, you will need to contact them to discuss payment arrangements as each retailer may have different requirements.