

PG&E's Guide to Managing Your Bill

Your Checklist for Summer Savings



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Checklist for Savings

The keys to managing your bill this summer are understanding how you are charged for the energy you use, and knowing how much energy you're using. Now that you have SmartMeter technology, you have access to more information on your energy use—and new tools to help control your energy costs.



Get to know your rates
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Sign up for Energy Alerts
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Use Energy Alerts to control your bills
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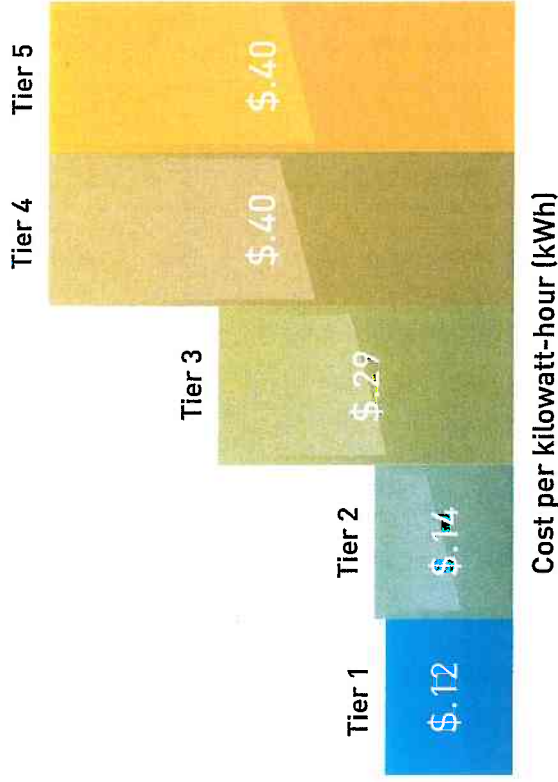


Enroll in the Balanced Payment Plan
www.pge.com/myaccount

✓ Get to know your rates

Pacific Gas and Electric Company's (PG&E) tiered rate structure isn't new, but knowing how it works can help you understand the relationship between the energy you use and what you pay. The State of California has adopted a policy to encourage energy conservation where utilities like PG&E charge residential customers on a tiered rate structure. With tiers, electricity is charged at a progressively increasing rate based on your household's use.

Tiered Electric Pricing



*To create a more simplified rate structure, the most common residential pricing plan (E1) has streamlined Tiers 4 and 5 so a kWh of electricity costs the same in these tiers. Customers will see up to five tiers of use on their bill. Rates as of 6/1/10 for customers receiving PG&E bundled service (generation, transmission and distribution).

Your rates explained

At the beginning of each month, you start with a baseline amount of electricity where energy costs the least—Tier 1. As you use more electricity throughout the month, you go from Tier 1 to Tier 2, and you could go all the way up to Tier 5, depending on how much energy you use. The higher the tier, the more you're paying for a kilowatt-hour (kWh) of electricity in that tier. Because the price of electricity increases sharply as you move beyond Tier 2, doubling your energy use can mean more than doubling your bill.

This summer, when many customers have an air conditioner or a pool pump running and kids home from school, it's easy for electricity use to start adding up and quickly move into higher-priced tiers. When this happens, any electricity you use becomes more expensive per kWh. For example, chores like drying a load of laundry with an electric dryer will cost much more at Tier 3 than they will at Tiers 1 or 2.

In Tiers 1 and 2, the cost is almost the same for one load of laundry. But in Tier 3, you would pay more than twice as much. If you reach Tier 4, the cost for one load of laundry would equal that of over three loads back in Tier 1.

Bottom line: Managing your energy use not only saves you money because you use less, it also keeps usage in the lower-priced tiers. Now with SmartMeter™ technology, when you make smart choices, like line drying your clothes instead of using the dryer, you can see the impact on your bill. Read more to learn about the tools and tips PG&E offers to help you take control of your summer energy bills.

COST TO DRY 1 LOAD OF LAUNDRY



Estimated cost is based on average operating conditions for customers receiving PG&E bundled service (generation, transmission and distribution).



Sign up for Energy Alerts

Powered by SmartMeter™ technology

Because the price of electricity increases sharply when you reach Tier 3, it's important to know if and when that happens. Thanks to your new SmartMeter™ device, you can now sign up for Energy Alerts. You can get your choice of a phone call, text message, or email, letting you know you're about to move into Tier 3. You'll also receive alerts if you move into Tiers 4 and 5.

Sign up for Energy Alerts by logging into My Account at www.pge.com/myaccount and selecting "My Account" and then "My SmartMeter."



Use Energy Alerts to control your bills

While receiving alerts alone won't lower your electric costs, using Energy Alerts to influence your energy use can make a difference. Here are a few ways you can use Energy Alerts to understand and control your monthly electricity bills.

Get to know your energy use

- Monitor the times when you move into higher tiers during the month. As you become familiar with when this happens, Energy Alerts will help you know when you're using more or less energy than in other months.
- Use Energy Alerts to monitor whether the energy-saving efforts you're making affect when you reach higher tiers during your billing cycle.
- With Energy Alerts, you'll know what price you're paying for electricity as you use it.

Combine Energy Alerts with My Account

- Create an account or log in to your existing account at www.pge.com/myaccount.
- If you're unsure why you received an alert for moving into a higher tier, you can check My Account to view your energy use. You'll be able to see how much electricity you're using each day, and even each hour, to help understand why the alert was sent.
- View the estimated charges for your electric usage before you receive your bill at the end of the month, so you can make changes to affect the outcome. Energy Alerts will update you on your progress along the way.
- See on which days you use more energy to understand the reasons behind an increase, like running extra loads of laundry, having guests over, or being out for the day.
- Discover where your energy goes by experimenting with appliances around the house and tracking the difference with My Account. You may be surprised by how much or how little certain appliances in your home consume.

Use Energy Alerts to make smarter energy choices

- If you know, because you've received an alert, that the price of electricity has gone up, you can choose to take greater energy-saving steps until the end of your billing cycle to affect your bill. Actions such as raising your air conditioner's (AC) setting by at least four degrees and using fans to maintain comfort, and line drying laundry instead of running the dryer, can help control costs until your next billing cycle.
- Make small changes throughout the month to decrease the amount of energy you use in higher tiers at the end of your billing cycle. Simple changes, such as unplugging small household appliances to avoid standby power, closing windows and drapes during the day to keep cool air in, and barbequing rather than using the oven can make a difference.
- For additional PG&E energy-saving programs and products that you can use with Energy Alerts, visit www.pge.com/summersavings.



Even out your bills with the Balanced Payment Plan

If you're like most people, summer is the time when your electricity bills tend to go up. While it doesn't lower the amount you spend on energy, PG&E's Balanced Payment Plan helps make payments more manageable by making your bills consistent each month. When you sign up for the Balanced Payment Plan, PG&E will average your annual energy costs over the last 12 months to arrive at a monthly balanced payment amount. Every three months, the average of your last 12 months of energy costs will be updated so you're always current.

Sign up by logging into My Account at www.pge.com/myaccount and selecting "Billing."