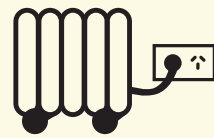


5

I have connected to an energy company, what do I need to know?



Energy contract

Once you choose a company to buy your energy from, you enter into a contract to pay for the energy they provide to your home.

The contract sets out:

- the prices you will pay for energy
- how long your contract is for
- whether you have to pay an exit fee to leave during the contract period
- how often you will get your bill and how you can pay (direct debit, BPay, Post Office).

Energy bills

You can get monthly or quarterly bills for electricity and bimonthly bills for gas. There is important information on your bill. For tips on how to read your bill – see our [Bill Reading Factsheet](#). Everyone worries about their energy bills from time to time. The Victorian Government has rules to help anyone struggling to pay their bills. For more information see our [Payment Difficulty Factsheet](#).

End of contract

If you do not do anything at the end of your contract, you will automatically be put on the Victorian Default Offer – the government's price for electricity or your companies best offer for gas. Alternatively, you can go on Victorian Energy Compare to see if there is an even cheaper energy plan for you.

compare.energy.vic.gov.au

Frequently asked questions

What are pay on time discounts?

Some energy plans have pay on time discounts, which reduce the total cost of the bill when you pay your bill by the due date. Discounts do not always mean you will get the cheapest bill. Some of the cheapest energy plans do not have pay on time discounts – they just start with cheap energy prices.

Only choose energy plans with a pay on time discount if you think you'll always be able to pay by the due date. If not, choose an energy plan that does not have discounts.

How will I know if energy prices change?

Energy companies can only increase your energy prices once per year. The energy company must tell you about any price changes, at least five days before they change your prices. If you're unhappy with the new prices, shop around for something cheaper.

Understanding energy



1

There are different companies that make, move and sell energy



Generators



Distributors



Retailers



The quality and reliability of our energy depends on the companies who make and move energy. You **cannot** decide which companies make or move the energy to use.

You **can** choose which company to buy your energy from. In Victoria, there are over 20 energy retailers to choose from.

2

You have a right to choose the best energy plan for you



Each company has a range of different prices for providing energy to your home – these are called energy plans. You pay for every unit of energy you use plus a daily fee to bring energy to your home.

It is important to choose the right energy plan and energy company, as the difference in costs between energy companies and energy plans can be hundreds of dollars. You have the right to choose the best energy plan for your home.



Good to know

- Your energy plan does not affect the quality and reliability of the energy you get – all households access the same electricity and gas.
- Every company has many different energy plans. You and your neighbour can be with the same company but pay different prices for energy if you are on a different energy plan.
- Energy prices change over time, so you need to regularly check that you are on the right plan for your household.
- The Victorian Government has rules to make sure that your energy will stay connected even if your energy company stops operating. If this happens, your account will automatically be moved to another company.

3

Changing energy companies or energy plans



Changing energy plans is easy. It is not like mobile phone contracts - you do not have to pay out your contract. Just call the energy company you want to switch to and they will help you.



Good to know

It is usually free to change energy companies and plans. At the most, you may have to pay \$20 to change companies.

Government rules mean that:

- Your energy stays connected when changing company.
- Your new company will take care of moving your energy bill to them.
- You only pay for the energy you are using with one company at a time (you will not get double charged).

4

Three options to find an energy plan for your home



Best offer

Government laws mean that your energy company must tell you if you could save money on another plan with your energy company. Look for a box on the front of your energy bill every three months that says **'could you save money on another plan'**. If it says that you can save money, call your energy company and ask to be put on the Best Offer. This is the cheapest energy plan for your household with your energy company. Every energy company has an interpreter service. The telephone number can be found on your bill.

Victorian Energy Compare

Victorian Energy Compare is a government website that compares all energy plans across all energy companies. By answering a few questions on the website, it will find the energy plans that are the cheapest for your home. The website is in English only so you may need someone to help you. Just go to compare.energy.vic.gov.au

If these sound difficult, ask for the Victorian Default Offer.



Victorian Default Offer (VDO)

If you don't want to choose an energy plan, you can call your energy company and ask to be put on the Victorian Default Offer – the government's price for electricity.

This may not be the cheapest energy plan for your home but it's a fair price for electricity set by the Victorian Government. This price is the same across all energy companies.

How to use your bills to take control.



AGL electricity account.

Proudly Australian since 1837.



034/4294967197
Sandra Sample

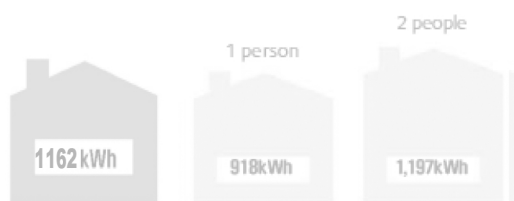
Billing period

This is how often you will be sent a bill for the energy you have used. You can ask your energy company for monthly or quarterly electricity bills.

How much energy are you using?

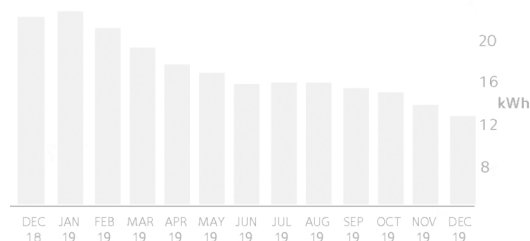
Bill period: 12 Sep 2019 to 10 Dec 2019 (90 days)

Compare with other homes in your area.



Average usage data supplied by Australian Energy Regulator based on homes with gas during spring. Visit energymadeeasy.gov.au for more information.

Average daily cost and usage.



Average daily cost Average daily usage

Snapshot.

Average daily cost: **\$3.78**

Average daily usage: **12.99kWh**

Same time last year: **23.13kWh**

Important numbers.

Enquiries: agl.com.au or 131 245

Faults and emergencies: 132 412 (Powercor)

Your account details.

Name: Sandra Sample

Account number: 7000 000 222

Supply address: 26 SAMPLE COURT
SAMPLEVILLE VIC 3008

Your bill overview.

Balance brought forward **\$118.55**

+

New charges **\$339.88**

=

Account balance **\$458.43**

Thank you.

Reading your bill can be daunting and confusing. This bill explainer will show you which parts of the bill are most important so you can find the information you need and ignore the bits you don't.

Account number

This is your account number with your energy company. Your energy company will ask for this anytime you speak with them.

How much is your bill?

Money owed from previous bills

This shows how much you owe from previous bills.

Energy costs for this bill

This shows how much it cost to provide energy to your home in the billing period.

Total amount owed

This is how much you owe from the previous bill plus the cost of energy for this billing period.



See our [Payment Difficulty Factsheet](#) for information on your rights to get help to pay your energy bill.

Easy ways to manage your account online.

Enjoy more control. Pay your bill, set-up eBilling and view your energy usage – all in one place – with My Account. Register today at agl.com.au/myaccount



Could you save money on another plan?

Based on your past usage our Saver plan may cost you up to \$120 less per year than your current plan.*

To switch plans, simply visit agl.com.au/switch or contact us.

*The above message is required by Victorian energy regulations

Is a cheaper energy plan available for your home?

In Victoria, energy companies must tell you if they have a cheaper energy plan for your home. If this part of your bill says you can save, you can trust this information.



Read our [Cheaper Energy Plans Factsheet](#) to find out how to get the cheapest plan for you.

How much energy are you using?

This tells you on average, how many units of energy you are using every month compared to the same time last year. It tells you if the amount of energy you are using is changing.



For great tips on easy ways to save energy while staying comfortable, go to our [Saving Energy Factsheet](#).

Important information.

Payment assistance. There are a number of options available to eligible customers, including Victorian Government energy concessions and rebates, AGL payment plans and the Centrepay scheme. To find out more, visit agl.com.au/Concessions

Need an interpreter? Call 1300 307 245.
需要传译员吗? 请电上述号码。
هل تحتاج لمترجم؟ اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.
Cần có thông dịch? Gọi số trên đây.

Hearing impaired (TTY). Call 133 677 and quote 1300 664 358.

If you don't wish to receive marketing information about AGL products and services, visit agl.com.au/DoNotContact

Compare energy plans
Visit compare.energy.vic.gov.au to compare all readily available plans in your area.

Moving? Visit agl.com.au/Move to arrange an electricity connection at your new premises.

Energy efficiency. For information about energy efficiency, visit www.victorianenergysaver.vic.gov.au or call 136 186.

Your electricity supply details.

Page 2 of 3

Supply address: 26 SAMPLE COURT SAMPLEVILLE VIC 3008
Supply period: 12 Sep 2019 to 10 Dec 2019 (90 days)
NMI: 62033944
Energy Plan: Savers

Meter no.	Read type	Start reference ¹	End reference ¹	kWh
A75835	Actual	1,379	2,541	1162.416

¹These reference reads are a guide only and may not reflect the total energy consumption for this billing period. Your next meter read is due between **10 Mar 2020**. Please ensure easy access to your meter on these days.

How we've worked out your bill.

Previous balance and payments.				Total
Previous balance				\$268.55
1 Oct 19 payment				\$150.00cr
Balance brought forward				\$118.55
New charges and credits.				
Usage and supply charges	Units	Price	Amount	
General Usage	1162.416kWh	\$0.29	\$336.98	
Supply charge	90 days	\$1.29	\$116.10	
Total charges			+	\$453.08
Credits				
Annual Electricity Concession				\$65.54cr
8% Pay On Time Discount				\$36.25cr
Total credits			-	\$101.79
Total new charges and credits			=	\$308.98
Total GST			=	\$30.90
Account balance				
(includes GST)				= \$339.88

Free interpreter service

All energy companies have a free interpreter service. If you need an interpreter, call the phone number shown on your bill and follow the prompts.



See our [Understanding Energy Factsheet](#) for our guide to how energy works in Victoria. We explain everything from choosing an energy company, energy contracts and pay on time discounts.

Are you getting your concessions?

Energy concessions are important in making energy affordable and can save you hundreds of dollars a year.



Go to our [Concessions Factsheet](#) to work out how to save money with concessions.

Account balance **\$458.43**

Payment not required.

Reference number 7011 1372 2691 2909

Post Billpay

*3201 70111372269129095123

Direct Debit[^]
Sign up to Direct Debit at agl.com.au/Payments or call 131 245.

Visa or Mastercard[^]
Online: agl.com.au/Payments
Phone: 1300 657 386
Biller Code: 208868

Mail
Send your cheque or money order along with this section of the bill to:
AGL Sales Pty Limited
Locked Bag 20024, Melbourne VIC 3001

[^]A 0.45% fee (GST incl.) may apply if we incur a fee due to your payment method, including if you pay by credit or debit card.
-A fee of \$2.00 (incl. GST) may apply if you pay your bill over the counter.

Biller Code: 208868
Ref. Number: 7011 1372 2691 2909

Post Billpay[®]
Make a Post Billpay[®] payment.
Online: postbillpay.com.au Phone: 131 816
In person at any Post Office, Billpay Code: 3201

Centrepay
Eligible residential customers can visit humanservices.gov.au/centrepay
AGL Centrepay CRN: 555-068-319-J

PayPal
To pay via PayPal visit agl.com.au/Payments

+00007011137226>

+002662+

<9129095123>

<0000000000> +444+

4

Payment difficulty



If you're having difficulties paying a bill, call your energy company

The fourth step to take back control of your energy bills is to get support to help pay your bill. You just need to call your energy company.

In Victoria, the government has rules to make sure energy companies help anyone who has difficulty paying their bill. You don't need to have a concession card to get help!

Good to know

- **Payment plans** are a great way to manage your costs. Rather than paying a bill in full, a payment plan allows you to make smaller, more regular payments. For example, paying every two weeks instead of paying your bill in full every month. For many people payment plans are far more manageable and much less stressful. There are no extra costs for paying with a payment plan.
- **Centrepay** If you get a Centrelink payment, you can set up an automatic payment plan called Centrepay. Centrepay is free and takes the stress out of needing to remember to make regular payments, by automatically paying an agreed amount to your energy company. You can start, change or stop using Centrepay whenever you like. Speak to your energy company about setting this up.

What help can I get?

I owe money from a previous bill

I can pay my next bill

Call your energy company.
You have a right to:

- set up a payment plan that will pay off the amount you owe over a two year period
- advice from your energy company on how to save energy around your home

The rules make sure that you cannot get disconnected as long as you are speaking with your energy company and paying what you can afford to pay.

I cannot afford to pay my next bill

Call your energy company.
You have a right to:

- set up a regular payment for an amount that you can afford
- put a hold on paying anything towards the amount you owe from previous bills
- advice on which of their energy plans will be cheapest for your home (see our [Cheaper Energy Plans Factsheet](#) to find out how to save with a cheaper plan)
- help from your energy company to access energy concessions and grants (see our [Energy Concessions Factsheet](#))
- advice on how to save energy around your home

I do not owe money from a previous bill

I can pay my next bill

Find out if you can save more money on your energy bill by reading our Energy Concessions and Cheaper Energy Plans factsheets.

I cannot afford to pay my next bill

Call your energy company.
You have a right to:

- set you up on a payment plan or extend the date you need to pay by.

You cannot get disconnected if you owe less than \$300.

The rules in Victoria make sure that you **cannot get disconnected** if you:

- Owe less than \$300 to your energy company.
- Are making regular payments on a payment plan. If you miss an occasional payment or are a bit late that's ok, just make sure you phone your energy company to let them know.
- Have applied for a Utility Relief Grant. See our [Energy Concessions Factsheet](#) for more information about this grant.

If your energy company does not offer you any help when you need it, then phone the Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria. The Ombudsman is a free service and acts like a referee to resolve disputes with energy companies. Just phone 1800 500 509. Make sure you have your bill handy so you can give them your account details.

1

Energy concessions



Take the first step towards cheaper energy bills

The first step to taking control of your energy bill is getting all your energy concessions. Concessions are not just for cheaper medication and visits to the doctor.

If you have a Health Care Card, Pension Concession Card or Veteran Affairs Gold Card you also have the right to get cheaper electricity, gas and water bills.

Government concessions are an important part of making essential services fairer and more affordable. With energy concessions, the Victorian Government pays money to your energy company to make your bills cheaper – your energy company does not lose any money.

Energy concessions can save you hundreds of dollars every year. And so, getting all your energy concessions is your first step to reduce the cost of your energy bills.

In Victoria, there are lots of different energy concessions. The best way to make sure you are not missing out is to call your energy company and ask them to check that you are getting all your concessions.

If you cannot pay your energy bills, you may be able to get a Utility Relief Grant.

With the Utility Relief Grant Scheme, you can get up to \$650 for electricity and \$650 for gas every two years to help pay unpaid bills. Call your energy company and ask about the Utility Relief Grant

Here is what you need to do

1 Before you call

Need an interpreter?

Your energy bill must include contact details for a free interpreter service. If you need an interpreter, look for the phone number on your bill and follow the prompts.

Make sure you have:

- Recent electricity or gas bill
- Concession card

2 When you call

Tell your energy company:

“I have a concession card. Please can you check to make sure I am getting all my energy concessions”

The energy company will ask you for your:

- Account number – you can find this on your energy bill (see our [Bill Reading Factsheet](#)).
- Name – the name on the bill must match the name of the concession card (see ‘Good to know’ below).
- Address
- Date of birth
- Information from your concession card:
 - Type of concession card (Health Care Card, Pension Concession Card or Veteran Affairs Gold Card)
 - Name on card
 - Customer Reference Number (CRN)
 - Expiry and start date of your concession card

The energy company will ask questions to work out what concessions you can get. For example, they might ask:

- Do you have a medical condition?

The energy company will ask for permission to contact the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to check you are eligible for concessions.

If you are eligible, your concession will be automatically applied to your bill.

3 After your call

Check that your concessions appear on every bill (see our [Bill Reading Factsheet](#)). Concessions will appear as credits. If they do not appear, call your energy company.

Your circumstances can change, so call your energy company every year to ask them to check that you are getting all your concessions.

Contact your energy company to update your concession details any time you:

- Get a new concession card
- Change address

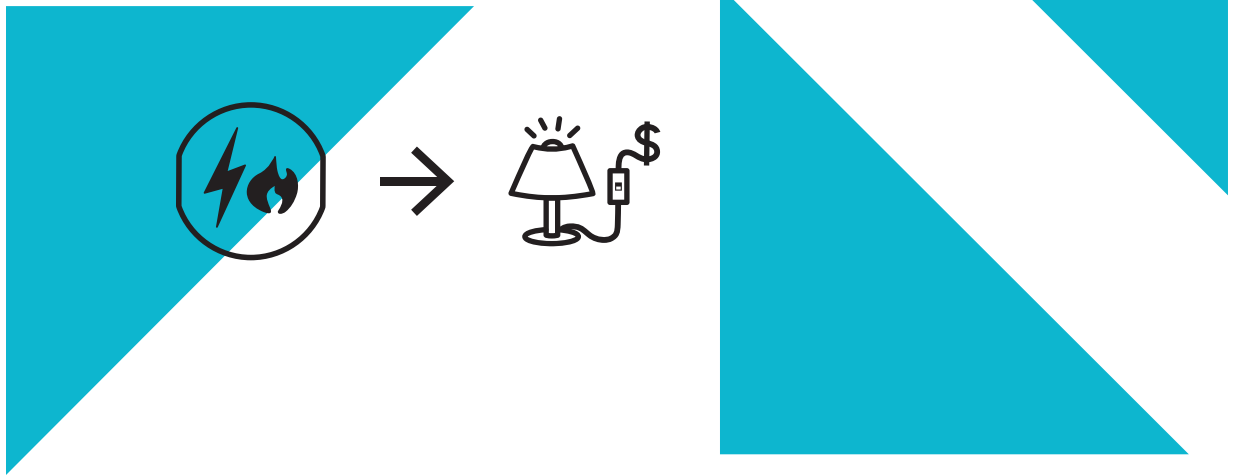
Don't forget to provide your concession details when you change to a new company.

Good to know

- The name on the concession card you are using must match the name on the energy bill to claim your concessions. If it does not, ask your energy company to add the concession card holder's name to your energy account.
- Energy concessions can sometimes drop off your bill. **Check every bill for concessions.**
- Energy companies can back date your concessions up to 12 months when you call them. **Take control of your energy concessions, remember to call your energy company today.**

3

Saving energy



Get smarter with your energy use

The third step to taking control of your energy bill is saving money that you spend on using your appliances.

Here are some easy tips on how to reduce what you spend on energy while staying comfortable in your home.

Don't worry about the small things

There is a plenty of advice available on saving energy but a lot of it talks about appliances that actually don't use much energy. For example phone chargers, kettles, toasters and stoves are all really cheap to run. You do not need to worry about using them.

Focus on minimising the costs of the most expensive appliances – the things that heat and cool – your heater, air-conditioner and fridge.

Heating and cooling

There are a few simple things you can do to reduce the amount you spend on heating and cooling your home. The good news is that you don't have to be cold in winter or too hot in summer to save money.

- Always turn the heating or cooling off if you are not in the room or leaving the house. Don't pay for heating or air conditioning that you are not using. It is always cheaper to turn things off and then back on again when you get home.
- Close doors to areas of your home that you are not using. The smaller the space, the cheaper it will be to heat and cool. You'll save and stay more comfortable by closing doors to keep the heating and cooling in this room.
- Close your curtains to help to keep the heat in during winter and the warm sun out in summer.
- Try blocking up gaps around your doors and windows. This is easy to do and will make your house feel much more comfortable.

Heating tips

- Set your heater to 20 degrees.
- If you are only wearing a t-shirt at home, turn your heater temperature down or even off. Remember, putting on a jumper doesn't cost anything.
- If you have a reverse cycle air conditioner (an air-conditioner that heats as well as cools), use it to heat. These use less energy than plug in heaters and can help you to reduce your costs.
- Service your gas heater every 3 years if you have one.
- Use electric blankets instead of turning your heating on overnight. Its around 20 times cheaper than a heater.

Cooling tips

- Set your air conditioner to 24 degrees to save money and stay comfortable.
- Use your fan if you have one, particularly overnight. You will be surprised at how much cheaper it is to cool your home.
- If you have outside blinds, put them down during summer to keep out the hot sun.

Fridges

- If you have a second fridge or freezer that doesn't have much in it, put these things into your main fridge and turn off your second fridge or freezer until you need it next. This simple step will help halve the costs of running your fridge

Never use bottled gas inside your home

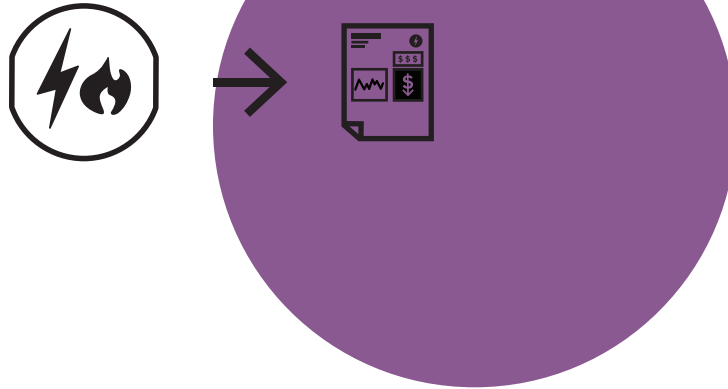
Gas stoves are very cheap to run and much cheaper than buying bottled gas. Never use bottled gas appliances inside your home as very dangerous Carbon Monoxide gases can build up.



For efficiency and safety, please maintain your appliances regularly by a certified technician.

2

Cheaper energy plans



Could you save money on another plan?

The second step to taking control of your energy bill is getting cheaper energy prices for your home. This isn't as hard as you might think.

Energy companies have lots of different plans, each with different prices for providing energy to your home. You can save hundreds of dollars by moving to a cheaper energy plan. The quality and reliability of energy does not change when you change energy plans or providers.

So, are you missing out on getting cheaper energy prices?

To see if you can save, look at the front of your energy bill. See our [Bill Reading Factsheet](#).

Energy companies must tell you on your bill if you could save money on a cheaper plan. This is called the "Best Offer". This is a rule that the Victorian Government has to make energy companies tell you if they have a cheaper energy plan for your home.

If your bill says you can save, you can trust this information. Just call your energy company and ask them to put you on this 'Best Offer'. This will make sure you are on the cheapest energy plan that your energy company has for your home.

Here is what you need to do

1 Before you call

Need an interpreter?

Your energy bill must include contact information for a free interpreter service. If you need an interpreter, look for the phone number on your bill and follow the prompts.

Make sure you have:

- Recent electricity or gas bill
- Concession card

2 When you call

Tell your energy company:

“My bill says that I can save money with another energy plan. Please can you put me on this Best Offer.”

The energy company will change your plan to the best offer while you are on the phone. You will then start to pay cheaper prices for the energy you get to your home.

It's that easy!

If you have a concession card, ask your energy company to check if you are getting all your energy concessions (see our [Concessions Factsheet](#) for information on how energy concessions can help you save)

Good to know

- Energy plans are different from mobile phone plans. **You DO NOT have to pay off the rest of your contract when you change to a cheaper plan.**
- When you change energy plan, the government has rules to make sure that your energy company can only increase your energy prices once per year – this helps to give you certainty about the prices you'll be paying.
- The energy company must tell you about any price changes, at least five days before they change your prices.
- Make sure you keep checking your energy bill to see if you can save and look for the box that tells you if you could save money on another plan.

If this sounds a bit difficult...

- If you don't want to choose an electricity plan, at the end of your contract you will automatically be put on to the Victorian Default Offer (VDO) – the government's price for electricity. This may not be the cheapest energy plan for your home but it's a fair price for electricity set by the Victorian Government.
- The price of the VDO is the same price, no matter which company you buy your electricity from.
- Once you have the VDO, you will stay on it until you ask to move to a different energy plan.
- The VDO is a good choice for people who do not want to 'shop around' to find cheaper electricity prices or talk to their energy company.

Your path to
cheaper energy