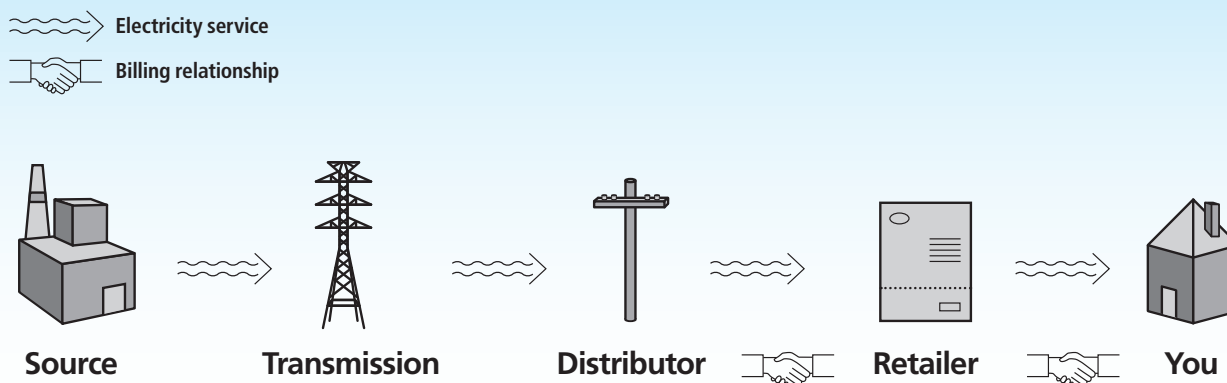


Understanding your electricity service



You have a retailer and a distributor

Each plays a role in bringing electricity to you.

Your retailer

Your retailer buys electricity on the market and sells to you, the customer. Your retailer also bills you and manages your account.

There are two kinds of retailers. Regulated retailers set their rate using a formula approved by the Alberta Utilities Commission. Competitive retailers set their rate independently. You choose the kind of retailer and which company to buy your energy from. For more information, or to compare retailers, visit the Utilities Consumer Advocate website, ucahelps.alberta.ca

Your distributor

Your distributor delivers electricity to customers, answers emergency calls, and does meter readings.

Your bill

Your bill comes from your retailer, but it includes your delivery charges as well. The delivery charges on your bill come from your distributor, not from your retailer.

Who to call with questions

Call your retailer if you have questions about your bill. Call your distributor if you have an outage or emergency. Phone numbers for both companies are on your bill.

Organizations involved in your service

Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC)

The AUC regulates natural gas and electricity utilities and markets to protect Albertans' social, economic, and environmental interests where competitive market forces do not.

Utilities Consumer Advocate (UCA)

The UCA is a government agency that educates consumers about their utility options. The UCA represents consumer interests at AUC rate hearings and mediates between consumers and retailers or distributors when they can't resolve issues through the company. Go to ucahelps.alberta.ca for more information.

Balancing Pool

The Alberta government created a corporation called the Balancing Pool to manage assets and agreements that came from deregulating the electricity market. The Pool manages these assets on behalf of Alberta's electricity consumers.

Alberta Electrical System Operator (AESO)

The AESO is a government-appointed, not-for-profit agency that oversees the provincial transmission system and power pool.

This information about your service is brought to you by your retailer and the UCA Plain Language Billing Project.

utilities **consumer**
advocate
you've got a powerful voice

ucahelps.alberta.ca

Understanding the language on your electricity bill

Some of these terms may not appear on your bill.

Measuring your use

kWh

Kilowatt hour is the standard measure for electricity use—one kilowatt of electricity in use for one hour. For example, a 100W light bulb uses 1 kWh if it's on for 10 hours.

Meter readings

Your meter readings are either actual or estimated. An actual meter reading is taken from the meter at your house or site. If distributors don't get an actual reading, they estimate the reading, based on past use and number of days in the period.

Site ID and meter number

These two numbers identify the meter in your house. Site ID is like the address or location of the meter, and the meter number is on the meter itself.

Multiplier

To convert your meter reading into kWh, multiply the reading by the multiplier. If your multiplier is 1, your reading is already in kWh.

Billing period

This is the time period of your bill, shown by start and end dates. Your billing period doesn't match the calendar month.

Billing code

A letter or word that shows whether your meter reading is actual or estimated this month.

Use – actual

This is how much energy you actually used, measured by your meter.

Use – estimated

Your distributor estimates your use when there's no actual meter reading. After the next actual reading, your bill amount adjusts to your actual use.

Charges from your retailer

Retailer

Your retailer buys electricity on the market and sells to you, the customer. Your retailer also bills you and manages your account.

Charges to buy electricity

These are charges from your retailer for the amount of electricity you use. These charges are the rate multiplied by number of kWh you use.

Rate

Your rate is how much you pay your retailer per kWh for electricity you use, shown in cents or dollars.

Administration fee

Your retailer charges this fee to cover billing costs and customer care.

Cancel, rebill, or adjustments

(charge or credit)

Retailers sometimes need to adjust your bill for a meter reading or other reason. To make sure your bill is right, your retailer "cancels" the original amount and "rebill" the correct amount. If the correction applies to several months, you may have several lines of cancel and rebill or adjustments, but it doesn't mean you're being charged more than once.

Charges from your distributor

Distributor

Your distributor delivers electricity to customers, answers emergency calls, and does meter readings.

Charges to deliver electricity

These charges are not for the electricity itself, but for delivery from the source to your home. They are charges from your distributor and are sometimes separated into transmission and distribution.

Transmission: Transmitting electricity over long distances from the source to your local area.

Distribution: Transmitting electricity within your area, usually within your city or town.

Local access fee

Your distributor pays a fee to the local government to use municipal land for power lines and substations. The fee also gives your distributor the right to provide electricity to your community and covers municipal taxes on property and land. The fee is shared by all customers in your area. Each local government sets the fee based on provincial law.

Rider

A rider is a charge or a credit that adjusts your distributor charges. Riders exist for various reasons. They cover changes in circumstances since the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) last approved your distributor's charges. They are also AUC-approved. You may have more than one rider on your bill at a time.

Balancing Pool rider

The Balancing Pool forecasts whether its assets will have a surplus or shortfall. Alberta's electricity consumers share this surplus or shortfall as a credit or charge on their bills, usually as a credit.