

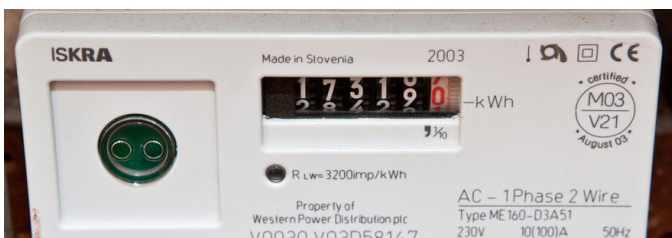
# How to read your gas or electricity meter

If you know how to read your meter you can check how much gas or electricity you have used, and therefore how much you should be paying your energy supplier.

If you don't have a smart meter, your supplier will send you estimated bills for your gas and electricity. This might mean that you end up paying for more than you've really used. Or you may pay less than you should, in which case you'll have to pay the difference later. Even if you do have a smart meter, you may sometimes need to check the meter yourself.

## Electricity meters

Electricity meters measure the amount of energy units used in the home. These are known as kilowatt hours (kWh) and it will say this after the numbers on the meter (see image) and on your bill. Read the first five numbers, and ignore any red numbers after the decimal point or comma. The meter below reads 17319.



## Economy 7

If you're on Economy 7, your electricity meter will display two readings: one for on-peak hours (which could be marked as 'normal' or 'day') and the other for off-peak hours ('low' or 'night'). On digital displays and pre-payment meters you might have to move between two screens marked Rate 1 and Rate 2 (or R1 and R2).

Because Economy 7 has two rates, one cheaper and one more expensive, it's important that on-peak and off-peak hours are being recorded the right way round,

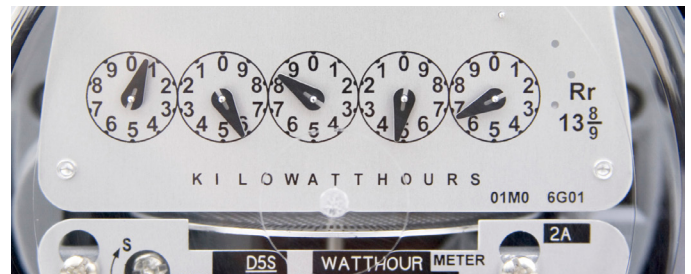
or during the correct hours. You can contact your supplier to check that it's correct.

## Gas meters

Gas meters measure gas in cubic metres or cubic feet and your supplier will then convert this to kWh when working out what you owe. Your bill should explain how they've calculated the conversion – see our factsheet 'Understanding your gas or electricity bill'.

Again the meter reading will have either four or five numbers, ignoring any red numbers.

## Dial meters

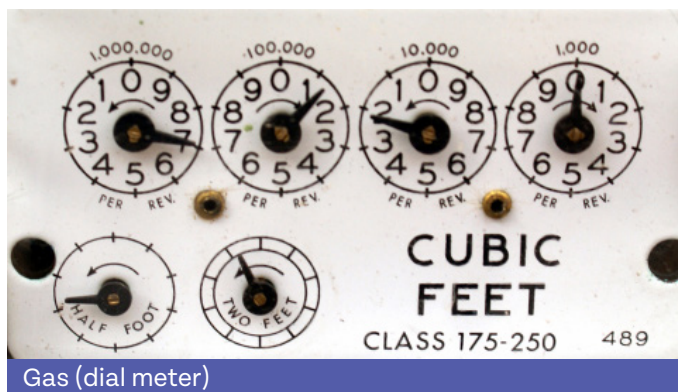


Some old meters - both electricity and gas - have a series of dials, like little clock faces. Here's how you read them ...

The meter above is for electricity, so it has five dials and says 'Kilowatthours' underneath the dials.

To read this kind of meter, start with the dial on the left. Write down the number that the pointer has just gone past, in this case 0, then move on to the next dial. Note that some dials in the row turn clockwise while others turn anti-clockwise – so the second dial is 5 as it has not yet reached 6. The full reading for this dial meter is **05846**.

If a point is directly over a number, look at the next dial to the right. If it shows a high number (8 or 9), it means the pointer hasn't passed the digit that it is hovering above. But if it shows a low number (0 or 1), it has.



Gas (dial meter)

See picture above for an example of a gas meter that shows this. The first dial shows the pointer right above the number 7. Now look at the second dial. This is 1, so it means that the dial before has passed the 7. The full reading for this dial meter is **7120**.

## Reading a smart meter

Millions of UK homes now have smart meters which are supposed to be able to send meter readings automatically to suppliers.

But the roll-out hasn't been without problems, so there are times when you may have to take a reading from a smart meter. In most cases you'll be able to get the information you need on your energy monitor (also called an 'in-home display'), but if you have to read your smart meter itself, begin by pressing 9 if your smart meter has a keypad. If you only have an A and B button, press A, and repeat until you reach the correct screen.

On your electricity smart meter, when you reach the correct screen it will flash or include the word IMP or IMPORT, and a number followed by kWh.

IMP  
0012345.6 KWH

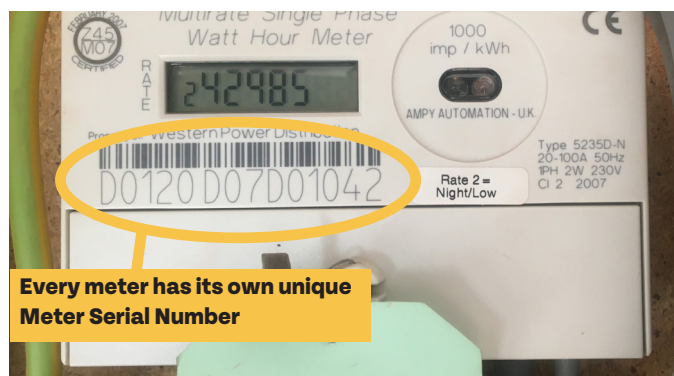
METER INDEX  
00072.317 M3

This is your electricity reading (image left). On your gas smart meter, the screen will flash or show the word VOLUME or METER INDEX, and a number followed by M3. This is your gas reading (image right).

If you are unsure, speak to your supplier.

## Meter Serial Number

Your meters will also have their own unique Meter Serial Number (MSN) - see picture below. It can be made up of numbers and letters and is often found below the barcode. The same number will be found on your energy bills, online account or app. You can use the MSN to make sure you are being billed for the energy **you** are using and not your neighbour's!



Every meter has its own unique Meter Serial Number

## Prepayment meters

Households with pre-payment meters don't need to take meter readings to make sure they are billed accurately, but it can still be useful to keep track of your energy use. Your meter will usually have a button that allows you to cycle through various screens, including one telling you how much credit you have left, and one showing your kWh unit and standing charge costs.



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We're a charity (298740) supporting people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes.

Our Home Energy Team offers free advice on domestic energy use to people in central southern and southwest England.

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