Reading Electric Meters

Digital Meters

Most digital meters display the kilowatt-hours consumed, followed by a “segment check,” which is a series of “8”s that show that the display is working correctly. If a part of a segment is missing, the read could be reported incorrectly.

For Digital Net Meters (customers with solar or wind installations), the display segments move back and forth, depending on whether grid power is being used or fed back. There is typically an arrow showing the direction of energy flow, with the words “delivered” or “received” displayed.

About Your Electric Meter

Regardless of your meter type, if you subtract the last reading you took from the one you take today, the result is the number of kilowatt-hours of electricity you’ve used during that time.

Saving Energy, Living Better...

For information about how to use less electricity, save money, and be more comfortable in your home, please call our Energy Advisors at (206) 684-3800, or visit our website at www.seattle.gov/light/conserve.

If you are wondering how much electricity an average City Light customer uses in a month, see the chart below.

### Average Bi-Monthly Residential Electrical Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>kWh</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single-family home with electric space and water heat</td>
<td>2,828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-family home with electric water heat only</td>
<td>1,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-family home with no electric space or water heat</td>
<td>1,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment with electric space and water heat</td>
<td>1,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment with electric water heat only</td>
<td>677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment with no electric space or water heat</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2009 Residential Customer Characteristics Survey

Mechanical Meters

It’s easy to read a mechanical meter once you learn a few tricks.

- The dials are like watch faces in a row (every other dial moves counterclockwise).
- If the pointer is between two numbers, record the lower of the two numbers.
- If the pointer is directly on a number, look at the dial to the right. If the pointer on that dial has passed “0”, record the number the pointer is on. If not, record the next lowest number on the dial you are recording.
Electric Meter Basics
- Electric meters measure a customer’s electric energy use in kilowatt-hours.
- There are two kinds of electrical meters: Mechanical and Digital.
- Mechanical meters have four or five dials to measure electrical consumption, and a metal disk that spins as power is consumed.
- Digital meters show power consumed by way of an LCD display.
- City Light is gradually phasing out the mechanical meters, but may homes and businesses still have them installed.

Estimated Meter Readings
If we are unable to read the meter, we will estimate how much electricity you’ve used based on previous consumption history at your address. As soon as we can, we will read your meter and correct any billing inaccuracies that occurred.

Meter Identification Number
You may want to look at your meter to make sure that the identification number matches the one printed on your bill in the “Detailed Billing Information” section. If you live in an apartment, you may have to check the identification number to determine which meter is yours. The meter identification number is generally five or six digits and in larger, bolder print. Older models may have only four digits. In the photo below, the meter number is 635445.

Opening and Closing Your Account
When you open or close your Seattle City Light account, we will need to figure out how much electricity has been used since the last meter reading. There are several methods to choose from:
- You can look at the meter, then call us at (206) 684-3000 to tell us where the pointers are positioned on the dials, or what the LCD display reads. A City employee will record this information and calculate the consumption.
- We can estimate the consumption.
- For a fee, a City Light meter reader can come out and read your meter.

You may use the blank meter dials below to record the positions of the pointers. This may be useful when you open or close your account, or if you inquire about your electricity consumption.

Understand Your Electricity Use
By reading your meter regularly, you will get an idea of how much electricity you use between regular City Light readings. If you get a bill that seems unusually high, read your meter and compare the reading with the “Current Reading” number printed on your bill.

For help with your account, please call (206) 684-3000, or visit our website at www.seattle.gov/light/accounts/resa/