

Why save energy and water?

Being efficient with the amount of energy and water you use is not only good for the environment, it will help you save money on your bills and avoid high bills.

You can ask your energy or water company for tips on how to save money on your bills. Some companies also offer energy or water audits.

For more information visit:

- www.nabers.com.au
- www.energysmart.com.au
- www.waterforlife.nsw.gov.au
- www.environment.nsw.gov.au

Common causes of high bills

EWON receives many complaints about high bills. While billing or meter errors do happen, common causes of high bills include:

- increased consumption (often due to new appliances or more people in the household)
- a catch-up bill or delayed bill
- arrears or additional fees and charges
- changes in energy or water prices.

If you are concerned about a high bill or can't pay your bill, call the company to discuss the problem. If you can't sort out the problem, call EWON.

Having trouble paying a bill?

Talk to the company about their customer assistance program or contact a community organisation about EAPA (Energy Accounts Payment Assistance) or PAS (Payment Assistance Scheme for water) vouchers.

Need a new appliance?

Old appliances which are not energy or water efficient can contribute to a high bill. Talk to a community organisation that offers NILS (No Interest Loan Schemes). They may be able to help you buy new energy efficient appliances with a no interest loan. Visit www.nilsnsw.org.au or call EWON for more information.

Fridges and freezers

- Check the seals. If the seals are letting air escape your fridge or freezer will be working twice as hard and drawing more energy to stay at the required temperature. Keep the seals clean and replace them if they are worn or cracked.
- Place your fridge in a cool spot, out of the sun and away from ovens.
- Ensure there is space around the fridge for ventilation.
- Freezers should be defrosted at least twice a year.

Old, secondhand and spare fridges

Old or secondhand fridges can be expensive to run. Getting rid of a second or spare fridge could save you around \$100* a year on your energy bill. (*Source: EnergyAustralia Fridge Calculator, visit www.energy.com.au)

Cooking

- Thaw frozen foods fully before cooking, they will take less time to cook.
- Use the minimum amount of water needed in pots and use the lid.
- Use your jug or kettle to boil water, rather than the stove.
- Don't overfill your kettle with water, only put in what you need.

Laundry

- Use cold water where possible.
- Soak clothes to help remove stains and reduce washing time.
- Dry clothes on a clothes line or clothes horse rather than a dryer.
- If you use a dryer, spin-dry clothes first. Never place dripping wet clothes in a clothes dryer.
- Regularly clean the lint filter on your dryer.



Tips for resolving complaints

1. If you have any problems with your energy or water company, contact them first and explain your situation. Keep records of letters, names, times and dates.
2. If the call centre staff can't help you, ask to speak to a supervisor.
3. If the problem is not fixed, contact EWON by phone, fax, email, letter or visit www.ewon.com.au to make an online complaint.

About EWON

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) provides an independent way of resolving customer complaints about all electricity and gas suppliers in New South Wales and some water suppliers. Our service is free, fair and independent. Our aim is to keep essential services within reach of everyone.

Contact EWON

FREECALL	1800 246 545* Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm
FREEFAX	1800 812 291
FREEPOST	Reply Paid K1343 Haymarket NSW 1239
INTERPRETER	131 450
TTY/VOICE	133 677
EMAIL	omb@ewon.com.au
WEBSITE	www.ewon.com.au

*Calls from mobile phones may attract a fee, which will vary depending on your service provider. If you are calling from a mobile phone, let us know and EWON will call you back.

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Lighting

- Turn off your lights when they are not needed.
- Use energy saving light globes.
- Keep lights and fittings clean.

Hot water

Water heating can account for 30% of your energy consumption.

- Take shorter showers (4 minutes or less is recommended).
- Take a shower rather than a bath.
- Fix leaking taps.
- Check your hot water system regularly to ensure it's not leaking.
- Fit an energy efficient showerhead.

Summer cooling

How to keep your home cool:

- Keep doors and windows closed during the hottest parts of the day.
- Repair door or window seals to prevent the cool air escaping (ask about products at a hardware shop).
- Hang heavyweight, closefitting curtains to your windows to provide insulation.
- Close the curtains to block out the heat of the sun.
- Use a door snake or rolled up towel to stop air movement under doors.
- Regularly clean the filter on your airconditioner.
- Don't overcool the house in summer. The recommended temperature in summer is 25 °C to 27 °C. The more you lower the temperature, the more it will cost you.
- Cool only the main room you live in (there's no need to cool a hallway, laundry or bathroom).
- Turn off the airconditioner once the room is cool.
- Use fans rather than an airconditioner. Fans cost less to run and can help circulate cool air.

Winter warming

How to keep your home warm:

- When using heaters, keep doors, windows and curtains closed to keep the warmth in.
- Repair door or window seals to prevent warm air escaping (ask about products at a hardware shop).
- Use a door snake or rolled up towel to stop air movement under doors.
- Lay rugs on bare floors to add insulation.
- Hang heavyweight, closefitting curtains to provide insulation.
- Don't overheat the house in winter. The recommended temperature in winter is 18 °C to 21 °C. The more you increase the temperature, the more it will cost you.
- Wear warm clothes indoors rather than increase the temperature on your heater.
- Heat only the main room you live in. Don't heat empty rooms or leave the heater on when there's no-one home.
- Turn off the heater once the room is warm.
- Check the thermostat on your heaters. A thermostat will automatically turn off the heater when it reaches the set temperature. If the thermostat is not working properly, your heater will be using full power and costing you more to run.
- Turn your heaters off at night.
- Avoid buying heaters which are expensive to run. Oil filled column heaters tend to be expensive heaters to run and are often left on for long periods of time. If you're looking at buying one, find out how much it costs to run before you buy it.

General tips

- Switch off appliances at the powerpoint when they're not in use. If the display light or standby option is on, energy is being used and it's costing you money.
- Don't use your oven for heating.
- Encourage everyone in your household to save money by saving energy and water.
- Do your own energy audit. Turn each appliance on/off and do a meter reading. Don't forget to check appliances in the garage and outdoor areas.
- Know how much your appliances cost to run. Before purchasing a new appliance, check its star rating or ask how much it costs to run. Contact your energy or water company, or the appliance manufacturer for more information.
- Take shorter showers and save water when you're showering. Instead of letting clean water run down the drain before you get in, use a bucket to collect the cold water. This water can be used to water plants or wash the car.
- Don't keep the tap running while brushing your teeth.
- When washing vegetables, put the plug in the basin or use a bucket to wash them in. You can use this water on your plants or garden.