

## HOW TO READ YOUR PG&E METER

There are two types of electric meters. Most people have the SmartMeter NEM

### Read the SmartMeter™ NEM

The following characteristics apply to a SmartMeter™ NEM:

- The five-digit display shows your net kilowatt hours (kWh) of energy use. This cumulative number usually appears on the top line. Some models may first display "88888...", to indicate that the display can show all of the values correctly.
- Below the five-digit display, or on another display, the number with the decimal point shows your current electrical usage in kilowatts\* (kW).
- If you're using energy from PG&E right now, then the meter display will show boxes "moving" from left to right.
- If you are sending energy to PG&E, then the boxes will be "moving" from right to left, and there will be a minus sign to the left or lower left of the kW display. (The speed of movement depends on how much energy is being delivered or received by PG&E.)
- Some meter models also show "Delivered" or "Received." Others show a right arrow when you use energy from PG&E and a left arrow when you send energy to PG&E.

**NOTE:** The SmartMeter™ doesn't display usage by time period (peak, partial-peak or off-peak). If you're a Time-Of-Use (TOU) customer, you can go online to view your daily net usage hour-by-hour.

\*kW is similar to how fast you are using energy at that moment in time, kWh is how much energy you have used over time.)

How PG&E charges you can be very complex depending upon the plan that you have. Some people have a Time of Use(TOU) plan where they pay more for electricity during peak usage hours. Peak power costs three times more than off peak power. Some people pay a flat fee no matter the time or day. There are also different tiers with different prices. Tier 1 is the cheapest rate and is the amount of electricity that someone needs to just get by. Use more than that and you pay tier 2 rates. If you just a lot more than that then you go to tier 3 which is about 50% more expensive than tier 1. Your monthly bill explains all of this and tells you how much of each tier you use.

To determine how much, you will have to pay for one day read your meter for kWhrs at a certain time of the day. Then the next day read it again at the same time. Subtract the previous day's number from today's number. Multiply it by \$0.167 (tier 1 price) and that will be your electricity cost for one day. Multiple that by 30 to get a monthly cost. For example, at 7am the meter reads 47170. The next day at 7am it reads 47186. 47186 minus 47170 equals 16 kWhrs.  $\$0.167 \times 16 = \$2.67/\text{day}$ . Multiply that by 30 and the cost is \$80.16 for the month.

You should also look at how many kws you are using and turn appliances on and off and see how it changes. It may surprise you how much it really costs to operate some items. For example, at 7am the meter is reading .33kws. Multiply that by \$0.167 and that the cost for one hour would be \$.06. Multiply that by 24 gives a daily cost of \$1.32 and multiplying that by 30 gives a monthly cost of \$39.68. However later in the day when the TV, lights, radio, computer and other items are running the meter is showing .961 kws. At that rate the monthly cost would be \$115.55. And that was without the air conditioner on.

Please note that in the examples I used the lowest tier cost. Actual costs could be three times higher due to when you use the electricity and what rate plan you are on.

**\*\*\*You can also view your usage and costs on an hourly basis on line at [www.pge.com](http://www.pge.com)**

Their webpage is pretty self-explanatory. It is easy to create an account so that you can login and see charts of how much your energy usage is costing you each day and at what time. It also has a lot of tips for cutting your energy costs.