



East Grand Forks Water & Light Department

Life Connected Since 1909

IS YOUR ELECTRIC USAGE HIGH?

Everyone uses electricity differently. Some people use many appliances, while others use very few. Some have multiple TV's and computers running all the time, and others have one TV on only a few hours a week. Houses of similar size have different insulation values, different windows, different color shingles and different thermostat settings, all contributing to very different utility bills.

If your electric usage seems high, the first thing to do is compare the kilowatt-hours (kWhs) used with your previous bills for the same time period. Take into account the season. Colder weather you will use more heat and hotter summers, you will use more air conditioning.

Some things to look at if you think your bill is too high

- Don't compare your bill with your neighbors. Too many factors are involved – size of house, number of people, type of heating system, etc.
- Are you using electric heat anywhere in your home? Base board heaters in the basement to supplement your gas furnace? Electric space heaters being used anywhere in your home? (Space heaters are a big culprit in high electric bills)
- Are you heating a garage? Are you plugging in your vehicle?
- How about your home itself? Are you heating a hot tub? Did you get a new TV?
- Do you ever run out of HOT WATER? If you have an electric water heater and one of the elements is not working, the working element will work double time and cause your electric consumption to go up, but still not supply enough hot water.
- Do you have a second refrigerator or freezer that is only half-full? Half-full freezers and refrigerators run more to maintain their temperature. Also, if your second refrigerator is an older model, it is probably using quite a bit of electricity.

To give you a better idea of how much power you are using and what uses it, two tests exist.

First, look at how fast your meter is turning. Then flip off all of your breakers. The meter should stop. Next, flip on the breakers one by one to see which makes the meter turn the fastest. This enables you to narrow down what is using the most power.

Second, read your meter at the same time every day for a week. Check the results. Does one day stand out in usage? What were you doing differently that day to cause the jump? Pinpointing electrical usage can help you save electricity. Understanding your electric bill may take a little investigation on your part.

Electricity is still one of the most economical sources of energy available.