

Reading your electricity meter can help you to check estimated meter readings and help budget for the next bill. You can take regular meter readings to work out how much electricity you have used and then work out the cost.

## Digital meter

If you have a 'digital meter' simply read the first five digits.

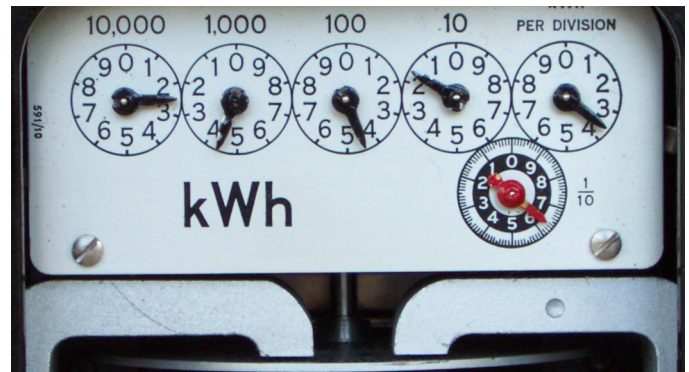


*The digital meter pictured here reads: 29897*

## Dial meter

If you have a 'dial meter' you need to read the first five dials from left to right and ignore the red dial.

- If the pointer is between two numbers write down the lower of the two e.g. if it is between 2 and 3 write down 2.



*The dial meter pictured here reads: 24413*

### Why read your electricity meter?

- Helps to check estimated meter readings
- Helps to budget for the next bill

### Reading your meter

- Read the first 5 digits / dials, ignore the red digit / dial
- Read dial meters from left to right; if reading unclear, use the next dial along to confirm

### Calculating the cost

- Take your previous reading away from your new reading, giving the number of units used
- Multiply this by the cost of a unit (shown on your bill)

### Calculating the cost - what isn't included in the basic calculation?

- Your fuel provider may add a 'standing charge' to your bill
- OR charge a higher rate for the first set number of (primary) units

## Working out the cost

Take the previous reading away from the present reading to get the amount of electricity used. The amount will be in kWhs. These appear on you bill as units. Multiply the number of kWhs by the unit cost which will be on the electricity bill.

Example:

- 1) Present meter reading     24413  
    Previous meter reading - 24197  
    Amount used                 =   216 kWhs
- 2) 216 kWhs x 12p = £25.92

The calculation is actually more complicated than this because fuel suppliers either add on a standing charge, or charge a higher unit price for a specific number of units each quarter (which is almost the same as a standing charge).

This is why you may see two different prices on your bill – For example, for the first (or primary) units at one price e.g. 19p, for the rest (or secondary) units at a lower price e.g. 12p. VAT is also added on at 5%

For the purposes of recording we are only using the price of the secondary units (cheapest number on the bill) as there will usually be far more of these. So it is useful to keep a record as a guide, but the bill will be slightly more than your record.

## Keeping a record

You may find it useful to keep a record using the chart printed here. Don't forget the actual bill will be more than this due to the standing charge, small number of more expensive units, and VAT at 5%

Example:

Week No	Meter Reading	Units (kWh)	Cost (12p per unit)
1	24197		
2	24413	216	£25.92
3	24558	145	£17.40

Week No	Meter Reading	Units (kWh)	Cost (___p per Unit)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			



FREE is a rural energy advisory programme, aimed at off-grid communities across England, and targeted at helping people in fuel poverty. The programme brings practical independent advice and information to residents regarding fuel choices, energy efficient technologies, and carbon reduction measures. It helps individual households to focus on reducing their fuel consumption and fuel costs, and also encourages local communities to work together to promote best practice in energy efficiency and carbon reduction.

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For more information please contact ACTion with Communities in Cumbria on Tel: 01228 817224 or visit our website: [www.cumbriaaction.org.uk](http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk)

### ACT champions community and rural issues

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