



Meter & Bill Estimations FAQ

Why is EWEB estimating electricity and water consumption? How does EWEB determine which routes get estimated and which ones don't?

Similar to other industries, EWEB has been experiencing a labor shortage that has impacted our ability to perform some functions at a traditional level, including dispatching Meter Readers to complete all manual reads. For this reason, we have been relying on calculated usage estimations. We attempt to stagger neighborhoods to limit back-to-back estimations when we can.

While estimations are a standard business practice in circumstances such as unsafe weather, technical difficulties, or complications accessing the meter, the recent labor shortage has expanded the use of this method.

How does EWEB estimate my usage?

The electric and water meters on your home work like the odometer in your car, counting energy used in kilowatt hours (kWh) and water consumed in kilogallons (kgal). EWEB reads the meter and then subtracts the previous meter read to determine your usage for the month. All meter reads are printed on your bill. When usage is estimated, the calculation is based on the average of prior month's usage, same month last year and prior month last year. Once the meter is read, the bill will reflect a "true-up" of the difference to reflect the actual consumption so that you are only billed for the kWh and kgal that you actually use.

The example below illustrates a situation where the estimated electric consumption was lower than actual consumption, resulting in a higher "true-up" bill the following month.

Example April. 2022 Estimated Bill		Example May 2022 True-up Bill	
March 2022 consumption	1600 kWh	April bill based on estimated consumption	1400 kWh
April 2021 consumption	1400 kWh	April actual consumption	1500 kWh
March 2021 Consumption	1200 kWh	True-up difference (1500-1400)	100 kWh
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Average	1400 kWh	May consumption	1000 kWh
Estimated April bill	1400 kWh	Total March bill (actual consumption + true-up)	1100 kWh

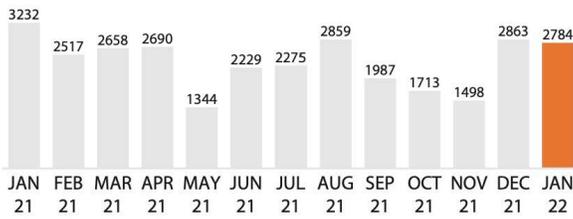
How long should we anticipate using estimated reads?

We are very excited to share that we have recently doubled our Meter Reader staff. We expect these staffing improvements to help us make significant progress in reducing estimations.

How do I know when a bill is estimated?

To find out if your usage was estimated, view the Electric or Water Usage section of your bill. If your bill was estimated, you will see the note: **based on an estimated read*. There will also be a note in the "message center" in the left margin of the first page of your bill. If this is a true-up bill, the *previous* bill will indicate that it is estimated and the current bill would be based on an actual meter read.

Present Reading 2504 kWh* - Previous Reading 99720 kWh = Usage 2784 kWh
 *based on an estimated read



THIS MONTH	29 Days Billed	41 Avg. Temp.	96 kWh/day
LAST MONTH	34 Days Billed	44 Avg. Temp.	84 kWh/day
LAST YEAR	33 Days Billed	43 Avg. Temp.	98 kWh/day

MESSAGE CENTER

This bill includes an estimated meter reading, noted by the word "estimated" in the usage detail. Estimated readings can be higher or lower than actual usage. Bills self-correct in the billing cycle when the meter is actually read, ensuring you pay for services that you actually used. Barring unforeseen circumstances, your next bill will reflect this "true-up" process.

If your usage information doesn't seem right, check out our Bill Self-Assessment tool at <https://www.eweb.org/residential-customers/pay-my-bill/bill-self-assessment>.

Why was my non-estimated bill so high? Nothing changed.

Following an estimation, it is not uncommon that the true-up bill is higher than expected. This may be due to an underestimation or caused by differing usage habits from the previous year. Because January 2021 had fewer cold weather events and lower precipitation, when that month is used in the estimate calculation, the result may be lower than actual usage.

A high true-up bill could also be caused by an increase in consumption over the last month. Even if you did not change your heating settings, the outdoor temperature and humidity will impact overall consumption as your heater works harder to maintain a consistent indoor temperature.

How can I reduce my energy use and lower my bills year-round?

EWEB offers many energy efficiency programs that can help lower your bill and add comfort. This includes rebates and loans for ductless/ducted heat pumps, water heaters, insulation, and windows.

We can also provide helpful tips and tricks on how to lower your usage, such as turning the thermostat down when away from home or at night, checking the heat settings on your water heater, and closing the fireplace damper while running your heating system.

Find more information at eweb.org/SaveEnergy.

What can I do with my large bill that was caused by a true-up?

EWEB will work with customers experiencing hardship due to a true-up bill. Together, we can explore payment arrangements or billing assistance to limit the financial impact. Contact Customer Service at 541-685-7000 for assistance.

To prevent true-ups or seasonal fluctuations on your bill, EWEB offers a Budget Bill plan that takes the average usage over a 12-month span and sets the bill amount at a fixed number. Learn more at eweb.org/BudgetBilling.

Is it true that this wouldn't be an issue if I had a smart meter?

Smart meters can eliminate the need for manual reads. However, the hilly, forested landscape of the McKenzie Valley is not compatible with the smart meter communication equipment EWEB uses. These meters rely on being able to connect with nearby signals remotely without too much in the way, such as hilly landscapes. If EWEB decides to employ smart meters in the McKenzie Valley, it will need to be a different technology.

EWEB will continue to pursue ways to advance meter technology upriver and install smart meters where we are able.