

Bill Explainer

We know how important it is for you to understand your energy bills, what impacts your usage, the rates you pay, and what makes them change. When you look at your energy bill, the first thing most people look for is the amount due, so let's start with your usage. Each month, your bill changes because of how much energy you use, when you use it, and the season. These are included in the rate plan and usage section, which you'll find on the first page of your bill. Bills fluctuate based on how much energy you use, which can vary by season. For example, if you use more gas for heating in the winter or use your air conditioner more frequently in the summer, your bill will be higher. You can track your usage over each billing cycle and view your monthly trends at the bottom of your paper or online bill. This can help you determine when you are using more energy and the steps you can take to conserve and save money. PG&E customers have choices, such as time of use and tiered rate plans, and can determine which rate plan works best for them. The rates you pay for gas and electric service are made up of two things: the cost to buy the natural gas and electricity you use, and a portion of what it costs to maintain and improve the systems, or pipes and wires, that deliver energy to you. The natural gas and electricity you use is purchased by PG&E or a third-party gas or electricity provider, such as a CTA or CCA. Those third-party charges will appear on your PG&E bill. The electricity you use is measured in kilowatt-hours. Natural gas is measured in therms. So why do energy charges change? Let's start with the gas and electricity purchased to serve you. Prices change based on supply and demand, which are impacted by things like the weather. PG&E does not control the market prices for gas or electricity and does not mark up the cost of what we buy to serve customers. The rates for gas and electric service can also change when the cost to deliver energy changes. For electric service, this includes the cost of operating and maintaining the electric system, like the poles, wires, and other equipment. It also covers safety and reliability investments PG&E is making, including undergrounding power lines, installing stronger poles and covered power lines, and improving safety power shutoffs to help protect customers. PG&E is also upgrading its electric system to meet state clean energy goals and increasing electricity demand for things like electric transportation, affordable housing, and economic growth, plus exploring new technologies to make sure the grid is resilient to extreme weather. The cost to deliver natural gas includes the cost to operate and maintain the gas system and other infrastructure. It also covers safety and reliability investments, like replacing gas pipelines, and leak detection technology to quickly find and fix gas leaks to improve safety and air quality by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. What you pay for gas and electricity also helps fund certain statewide programs, such as energy efficiency and support for low income customers. You'll find those listed under the Your Charges Breakdown section on your bill. The last sections of your bill highlight any assistance programs you're enrolled in and any bill credits or adjustments. If you'd like help identifying and enrolling in one of PG&E's programs to better manage your energy use and reduce your bill, or apply for financial assistance programs, visit pge.com.