

Energy Essentials: Understanding the High Usage Surcharge

VOICEOVER:

In 2015, the California Public Utilities Commission, or CPUC, approved a number of changes to electric rate structures that will impact the way all Californians pay for energy.

And as a part of this effort to promote energy conservation, the High Usage Surcharge was added in March 2017 to the Tiered Rate Plan.

On this plan, each billing cycle you're given a Baseline Allowance known as Tier 1, which is an allotment of electricity for things like cooking, refrigeration, lighting, laundry, and other key household needs.

How quickly you move through the tiers depends on how you use appliances in your home.

Your Baseline Allowance is based on where you live, the season, and your heating source.

So, as your electricity use increases over the billing cycle, to the point that it exceeds your Baseline Allowance, you move into a higher priced tier, Tier 2, that covers your electricity usage up to four times your Baseline Allowance.

The High Usage Surcharge is applied when your use exceeds four times your Baseline Allowance.

And while less than 1 in 10 customers is expected to incur the surcharge, it's always a good idea to save energy and money.

PG&E offers a variety of resources that can help, like High Usage Alerts which notify you when you're at risk of incurring the surcharge so you can take immediate steps to reduce your usage.

We also offer the Home Energy Checkup which shows you where your home uses the most energy, and the Electric Rate Plan Comparison Tool, which shows you rate plan options that aren't subject to the High Usage Surcharge.

Learn more about the High Usage Surcharge and smart ways to avoid it today.

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Video opens on a blue background with text that reads: "Understanding the High Usage Surcharge." From the top of the screen, four photos fall down covering over the text, showing PG&E customers lowering their household energy usage in various ways. The screen slides left, and a white screen slides in from the right with a graphically represented equation on it. From left to right, the equation consists of a graphic icon of two tiers representing the Tiered Rate Plan, a plus sign, and a second graphic icon of circled triangle with an exclamation point inside, representing the High Usage Surcharge. A blue wipe rises from the bottom of the screen, covering over the white screen. On the blue screen is a graphic illustration of three rectangle boxes connected horizontally, the first two white and the third orange. The first two are labeled "1" and "2", respectively, and the third contains a circled triangle icon representing the High Usage Surcharge. The first box is highlighted with a bold white outline and an indicator arrow appearing over the top, text reading "Tier 1" populating the inside, and text reading "Baseline Allowance" appearing underneath. Five icons appear above the box, one at a time: a stove, refrigerator, lightbulb, washing machine, and charging cell phone. The entire screen slides down and a white screen with an illustration of the state of California slides down from the top. Two location pins drop onto the California illustration and animate with a slight back and forth movement upon landing. The California illustration slides left, and three icons slide into its place: a sun, snowflake, and rain cloud. Those three icons then slide left and are replaced by two more icons: a droplet and a lightning bolt. The screen slides up, and the blue screen with the three connected boxes slides back in from the bottom, with box 1 still highlighted and icons still over top. The indicator arrow and white outline that were highlighting box 1 begin to slide right to box 2 and simultaneously, several more icons begin to flow out above the illustration, pushing up and shrinking the previous icons. The white outline comes to rest on box 2, which then widens to twice the length of the first box while the text "Tier 2" appears inside. Icons continue to flow out of the top of the illustration, and two numbers appear on the edges of the widened and highlighted box: "1x" on the left edge, and "4x" on the right edge. "1x" fades out, the widened box returns to normal size, and the white outline and indicator arrow begin sliding right again to the third box, as icons continue to flow out of the top. As the white outline and indicator cross over into the third box, which is the orange box with the triangle icon inside, the white outline and continuously flowing icons turn orange, until the outline, now fully orange, finally settles around the third box. The triangle icon pulses as orange icons continue to flow out of the top. The three boxes and icons then slide left while the triangle icon stays in place, detaching from them. As the three boxes and icons slide left out of the screen, ten icons of people slide in from the right, until stopping centered above the triangle icon. One of the ten people icons is highlighted while the rest fade back. The full blue screen slides left off the screen, and a white screen with a graphically illustrated laptop slides in from the right. On the laptop screen, p-g-e-dot-com types out. The laptop slides left partially off the screen and the URL fades out, while a cellphone icon slides in from the right. Both the laptop and cellphone icon are now on screen, and alerts represented by orange talk bubbles with exclamation points inside of them pop up next to each device. Both icons and the white screen slide left off the screen as a blue screen slides in from the right. A faint clipboard icon appears behind white text reading, "Home Energy Checkup," with the URL text, "pge.com slash my energy use" underneath. The clipboard icon and text slide left off the screen as a faint laptop icon slides in from the right behind white text reading, "Electric Rate Plan Comparison Tool," with URL text "pge.com slash rate plan options" underneath. Laptop icon and text slide left off the screen, leaving a blue background. PG&E logo appears and URL text types out on "pge.com slash high usage surcharge."