

4 Questions Renters Should Ask Their Energy Providers



We know taking control of your energy usage can be difficult, especially when you are renting your home. Here are some helpful tips and resources you can use to become a smarter energy consumer.

What rate plan is best for me?

Did you know that there are often several ways to be charged for the energy you use at home? If your rental unit has an individual meter, check with your energy provider to see if they offer different rate plans – like a time-of-use rate or a subscription plan – and find an option that best suits your lifestyle. These resources on **Energy Rate Plans** will help you learn more about what might be available to you and assist in narrowing your choices to what could work best for your situation.

How can I benefit from renewable energy options?

While you may not be able to install solar panels on your home, did you know that there are still options for you? Many energy providers offer community solar programs or wind energy credits that allow consumers to access renewable energy generation options. These programs can reduce your carbon footprint and, in certain cases, might lower your bills as well. Check with your energy provider to see what renewable energy programs are available for you and the potential impact on your bill.

Who can I talk to about payment options?

Sometimes, it can be difficult to make ends meet. If you're facing financial hardship, ask your energy provider about available payment solutions. From adjusting your payment date to a different time of the month to enrolling in assistance programs or a prepay plan, your energy provider should have options for you. Remember, you might also be able to enroll in multiple assistance efforts through local and federal programs, such as LIHEAP and weatherization upgrades to lower bills going forward.

Where can I lower my energy bill and create a more comfortable home?

Check with your energy provider to see if they offer rebates for ENERGY STAR™ labeled appliances not included in your lease – such as air purifiers or dehumidifiers. Your energy provider might also have an online marketplace where you can purchase and receive discounts on energy-efficient technologies, like LED light bulbs. They might also provide free energy-saving kits to help lower your monthly usage, and you might also want to ask your landlord about an energy audit to identify additional opportunities to save.

To discover additional questions that you can ask to become a smarter energy consumer on heat pumps, electrification and more, visit [WhatIsSmartEnergy.org](https://www.whatissmartenergy.org)



4 Questions Renters Should Ask Their Landlords



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How much does this unit pay for energy?

Are you considering a few options before deciding on where to move? Ask the landlord or property manager for any prior energy history to see how much typical energy bills are. Depending on the age of the building, how it was constructed and what energy-efficient upgrades have already been made, your energy bill might vary greatly compared to a similar sized unit elsewhere. Be sure to get bills from both winter and summer months as energy expenses can vary considerably depending on the unit's HVAC system, insulation, type of windows and more.

Already moved in? You can work with your landlord to find cost reductions that likely affect their bottom line too.



Here are some useful tips for a more comfortable rental unit:

Where can I save energy and water?

Look around your home and see about adding simple resources to help you save energy. Many electronics use what's called phantom power, meaning they use electricity even when they're switched off. You can install smart plugs or use surge protectors that allow you to easily turn off devices when not in use or simply remember to unplug them when you're finished. While LEDs are much more efficient than other bulb types, don't forget to turn off the lights when you leave the room too.

You can also ask your landlord to have any water fixtures switched to low-flow EPA Water Sense-labeled options. Water heaters typically use about 20% of a home's energy usage, and these low-flow options help to reduce your water heater's impact

Why does the HVAC system struggle to keep my home comfortable?

Efficient systems work better, reduce costs and avoid costly repairs. If your landlord is responsible for the HVAC, you may remind them to change the filters more frequently to improve your home's air quality and reduce stress on the system.

Also, adding things like window treatments or area rugs can help maintain the temperature in your unit. Don't forget to see if you need door sweeps to stop outside air from getting in.

What else can I do to lower my heating and cooling bill?

Ask your landlord to replace worn-out weather stripping or recaulk areas where air is getting in or out of your unit. Reducing the amount of air leaks is a cost-effective way to cut heating and cooling costs, improve durability, increase comfort and create a healthier indoor environment.

You can also check with your energy company to see if they offer free energy-saving kits filled with the items and information needed to weatherize and optimize your home for efficiency.

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