

# Setting up energy and water accounts

This Fact Sheet explains how to connect electricity, gas and water to your residence or place of business.

Please read this Fact Sheet if you want to know how to:

- open an electricity, gas or water account
- move in and out of a property



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## Introduction

If you have moved into residential or business premises that have previously been occupied by others it is likely that electricity, water and – in some cases – gas supplies will still be connected.

For electricity and gas you must contact suppliers of these services to establish an account in your name. They can also assist in reconnecting a service if it was disconnected while the premises were unoccupied. For water services, you will only need to establish an account if you are the owner of the property.

Separate requirements may apply if you are moving into new premises not yet connected to these services. For further information, see *Fact Sheet: Getting connected*.

## Opening an electricity or gas account

For electricity and gas, you can usually select a supplier and contract of your choice. For a full list of energy suppliers, visit the website of the Australian Energy Regulator at [www.aer.gov.au](http://www.aer.gov.au). Not all suppliers necessarily sell energy in your area.

For further information about your options, see Fact Sheet: *Choosing an energy supplier and contract*. For information about energy marketing, see *Fact Sheet: Energy marketing – rights and responsibilities*.

Note that if you have moved into a complex that has contracted a supplier to supply energy to all residences or tenancies in that complex, you may not be able to switch energy suppliers. Check with your property manager or body corporate for your options.

Also, be aware that if you start using energy without first contacting a supplier to set up a new account, you will be considered to have an arrangement with the last supplier responsible for that property. This is referred to as a deemed customer retail arrangement, and the rates are usually higher than rates under contracts.

However, as soon as the supplier is aware that you are using energy at the premises it must contact you with details of the prices and conditions that apply under this arrangement and your options for establishing a contract with that supplier. Look for a letter addressed to “Dear Occupant” or “Dear Customer”. You can also choose to switch to another supplier.

## Transferring an account

If you are moving and were happy with your previous contract and supplier consider talking to them about transferring your account to the new premises. This is particularly valuable if you are liable for a termination fee for leaving a fixed-term contract early. The supplier may waive the fee if you continue with them.

## Concessions

If you are eligible for an energy concession contact the Concessions SA hotline on 1800 307 758 to find out how to apply. Check each electricity bill to ensure the concessions have been applied.

## Security deposits

Energy suppliers may ask new customers to pay a security deposit if you have outstanding debts. Your energy supplier must refund your security deposit once you have established a satisfactory payment history.

## Opening a water account

In South Australia, the landowner is responsible for a water account and you will need to establish a water account in your name if you purchase a property.

If you are renting, your lease will set out your arrangements for the payment of water services. Your landlord may pass on the full water consumption costs to you. You do not need an account and will not be billed directly by the supplier.

SA Water currently supplies most water services in South Australia. However, following the reform of water industry legislation some councils and private operators are also licensed and may provide your water services. For further information, contact SA Water on 1300 650 950 or visit its website at [www.sawater.com.au](http://www.sawater.com.au).

## Moving in

Here are some tips for avoiding problems with your electricity, gas and water bills at your new premises.

### Establish authorised contacts

Energy and water suppliers can only talk to the account holder or an authorised person about an enquiry, request or complaint. If you have a partner, spouse or house mate who will also be responsible for the account, include them as an authorised person when setting it up.

### Record the meter number and reading

Record the serial number on the meter. This is useful to give to your supplier at the time of sign up to make sure that they start your account correctly. Read your meter and take a photo for proof. You can check your reading and your meter number against your first bill to check the supplier has billed you correctly.

For more information, see *Fact Sheet: Meters Explained*.

### Ensure meter access

You must allow safe and clear access to your meter. If your meter is not accessible at the time of a scheduled meter read your bill may be estimated based on prior usage. To avoid estimations, contact your energy or water supplier to find out what arrangements can be made.

## Pay on time

An energy supplier may disconnect you and a water supplier may restrict supply if you do not pay your bill. If you're having trouble paying, contact the supplier(s) immediately to find out what assistance they can offer. For further information, see *Fact Sheet: Payment assistance*.

If electricity and gas are included as part of your rental agreement, your landlord is responsible for paying the energy bills. If your landlord fails to pay an account on time and the premises are threatened with disconnection, contact the Residential Tenancies Advisory Service on 131 882.

## Moving out

Here are some tips for avoiding problems at your old premises.

### Close/transfer your account

If you do not contact your energy supplier to cancel or transfer your account they may continue to charge for any future use at your old address. You should contact them at least three days before you move so they can arrange for a final meter read.

For water accounts, your account will be closed or transferred by your conveyancer as part of the property sale and purchase process.

### Read the meter

Read your electricity, gas and water meters and take a photo (noting the time and date it photo was taken) as proof of the reading. Check the reading against your final bill to avoid paying for the new occupant's usage.