

MID E-Release

Information Release



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Why is my electric bill higher this month?

- **Six things to check on electric bills**
- **Six ways to control your energy costs**
 - **June-July high temperature comparison**
 - **Digital smart meters: How accurate are they?**

If your MID electric bill doubles and you're not sure why, it's a maddening and helpless feeling. But like they say, knowledge is power. So start by getting to know your electric bill. Then empower yourself with some energy saving know-how. You'll be ready to take control of your energy costs.

Need more info? MID customers, empower yourselves with the information in this document. If you still have questions or need resources, call these numbers or check the links below.

Billing questions	MID Customer Service Dept.	209 526-7337 1-888-335-1643 toll-free
Balanced Payment Plan		209 526-7337 1-888-335-1643 toll-free
Energy Conservation Hotline	MID Energy Services Dept.	209 526-7339 1-800-304-5373 toll-free
Refrigerator recycling rebate		1-800-299-7573 www.appliancerecycling.com
Energy-saving ideas & programs		http://www.mid.org/services/save/default.html
Free online home energy check-up		http://www.mid.org/services/save/energydepot.html
Lights for Le\$\$ coupon		http://www.mid.org/rebates/pkts/cfl-2009-en.pdf

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How to beat the electric system

Inside tips from the people who built the system: MID

6 things to check on your electric bill

Some MID customers received July electric bills that were much higher than their June electric bills. Because MID installed smart meters at their homes during June or July, these customers focused their frustration on the new meters. That's understandable. But it's much more likely, that one or more of these six factors played a part in higher July electric bills:

1. **Electric rate increase** – MID electric rates rose seven percent on Jan. 1 and two percent on June 1, 2009. (A rate increase planned for Sept. 1 was cancelled.) Higher power supply costs last year, along with spending on programs required by the state and federal government, were factors pushing MID rates up in 2009.
2. **Summer rates** – Electric utilities charge higher rates in the summer because power supply costs more during the summer. MID summer rates are in effect May-Sept. each year. Rates are lower Oct.-Dec.
3. **Higher daily electric use** – Check how many kilowatthours you used per day during the billing cycle. Compare to last month. Did you use more electricity per day?
4. **Hotter weather** – This year, the first 20 days of July were much hotter than the first 20 days of June. It depends on what days your bill covered, but this could make a big difference in the dollar amount.
5. **More days in billing cycle – Smart meters could play a role here.** If your smart meter was installed in the middle of a month, your electric bill may cover one-and-a-half months. Check the days in your service period. If you see 36-45 days, this may be what happened. It will happen only **once**. (Note: Your previous month's bill was for *less than* one month.) From now on, your billing cycle will average the usual 30 days (normal range is 25-35 days).
6. **Carryover from month before** – Is there an unpaid balance from last month? Perhaps the MID bill and your check crossed in the mail.

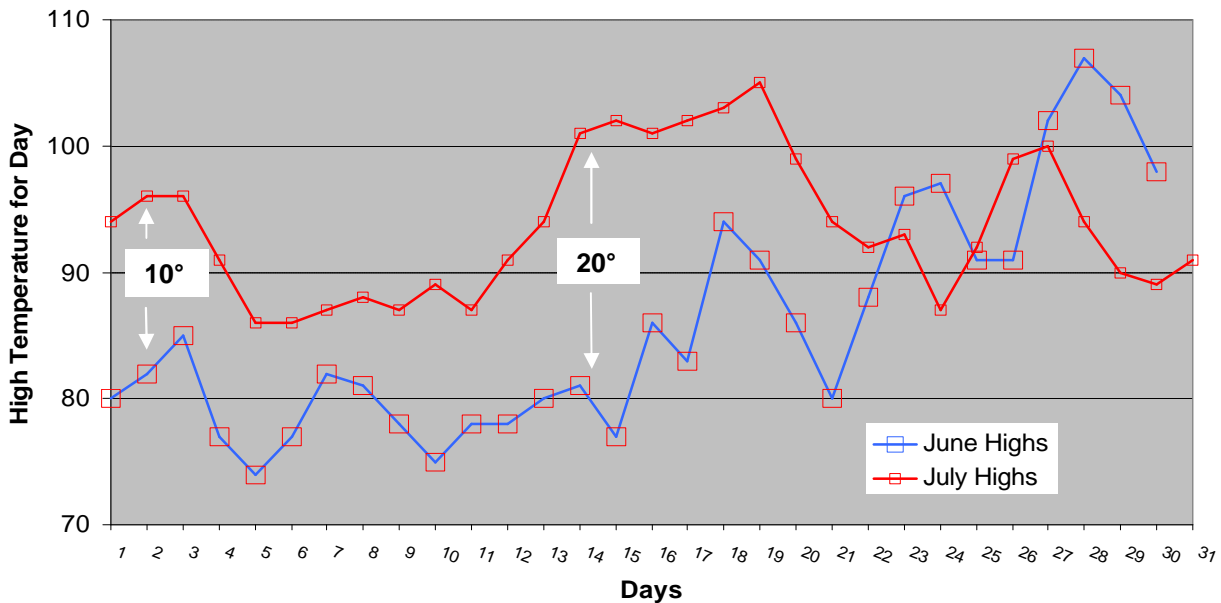
6 ways to control your energy costs

With your newfound energy knowledge, you're in the driver's seat. Take the wheel!

1. **Reset your thermostat to 78/85** – In the summer, set your thermostat to 78 degrees – or higher – when you're home, 85 if you're away for more than a few hours. *Each degree higher lowers your energy use about three percent.*
2. **Avoid indoor heat build-up** – Your air conditioner runs less if you don't let heat build up inside your home. Draw shades and curtains, run major appliances only after 9 p.m. and avoid using the oven or cook top.
3. **Recycle the refrigerator in your garage** – The garage is way too hot for any fridge or freezer, especially inefficient older models. Take advantage of MID's recycling program. Our contractor will haul away your old fridge at no charge, properly dispose of it and even pay you \$35.
4. **Switch to CFLs** – Compact fluorescent lights use one-fourth the energy and last up to 10 times as long as incandescent bulbs. Buy \$20 of ENERGY STAR® qualifying CFLs, and MID will credit your electric bill \$10. Look for our coupon at local retailers or download it from www.mid.org.
5. **Sign up for Balanced Payment Plan** – BPP makes all of your electric bills about the same dollar amount by averaging this month's bill with bills for the past 11 months. Call MID Customer Service for details.
6. **Do a free online energy check-up** – Visit the Energy Depot at www.mid.org to build a customized energy profile of your home. You'll use your personal heating/cooling system and your own appliances. Do a room-by-room home energy check-up like the pros. Energy Depot gives you a detailed online report, including recommended actions you can take to cut your energy use – and save money.

Summer temperatures: A big factor in electric bills

High Temperatures June & July 2009



When electric bills jump from one month to the next, a rise in temperature often plays a role.

- **When temperatures are higher**, your air conditioner runs more hours.
- **More air conditioner use** means higher electric bills.
- **Up to half of your summer bill** can be from air conditioner use.

What you can do about it

- **Reset your thermostat to 78/85** – In the summer, set your thermostat to 78 degrees – or even higher – when you're home, 85 if you're away for more than a few hours.
- **Every degree higher lowers your energy use about three percent.**
- **Use fans to move air so you feel cooler.** Fans use about one-tenth (1/10) as much electricity as central air conditioning.
- **Sign up for the Balanced Payment Plan.** BPP makes all of your electric bills about the same dollar amount. It averages this month's bill with bills for the past 11 months. Call MID Customer Service for details at 209 526-7373 or toll-free 1-888-335-1643.

MID digital smart meters: How accurate are they?

- **Accuracy of MID smart meters is within three-tenths of one percent (3/10 of 1%).**
- **MID's digital smart meters are certified** to comply with standards set by the National Institute of Standards Technology (NIST).
- **All MID smart meters are calibrated at the factory.**
- **85 out of 85 smart meters that MID has re-checked were accurate** to the 3/10 of 1% standard. Since Jan. 2009, the MID Meter Dept. has responded to at least 85 requests to re-test smart meters installed at customer homes.
- **Most of the re-checked smart meters tested 100.0% accurate.**
- MID has found a few old mechanical meters that no longer accurately recorded electric use.