

Frequently Asked Questions: Eskom

General Prepaid Questions

How do I get prepayment electricity?

If a customer requests a prepayment meter instead of the monthly billed system, Eskom will provide it where possible but there are a few limitations .

- You must already have electricity, (normally you will then receive a monthly bill.)
- You must receive your electricity from Eskom. If you receive your electricity from a local supply authority or a municipality, Eskom can unfortunately not give you a prepayment meter. In that case you will have to approach your local supply authority. Many other supply authorities now also provide prepayment meters but since they purchase the electricity in bulk from Eskom and then distribute it as they wish, Eskom cannot dictate whether a third party provides prepayment or an alternative system. If you currently receive an electricity account, the supply authority details will be on it. It should have the name of the supply authority on the account. It should also have a physical address and telephone number where you can enquire about this.
- Most importantly. If you have a prepayment meter, you will have to buy your electricity from a prepayment vending machine. These vending machines are expensive to install and maintain and Eskom can only justify the cost if there are many customers in the same geographical area. Usually a request for prepayment can only be accommodated if there is already a prepayment area (called a Supply Group) and a vending machine in your area.

If the above conditions are met, Eskom can usually provide you with a prepayment meter. Look on your account for the contact details and get in touch with your local Eskom office or phone the Eskom National Call centre to enquire about the possibility of getting a prepayment meter. The Call Centre numbers are on the main Eskom <http://www.eskom.co.za> web page.

I want my own prepayment meter(s).

Eskom does not normally provide more than one installation per dwelling but some customers would like additional meters for tenants, flats or holiday camps/homes to enable them to charge occupants for their individual electricity usage. In this case you can purchase your own prepayment meters directly from the manufacturers and also arrange to get pre-coded electricity tokens from the same manufacturer. Note: You will then have to arrange with an electrician to install these meters for you on your own reticulations system in the house behind your existing meter. The prepayment meter will not replace your existing meter and Eskom will still use your existing meter for your electricity supply. You will not be able to purchase your electricity tokens from Eskom for this new meter and you must arrange with the meter manufacturer to also provide you with a number of pre-coded electricity tokens for selected amounts. You can then use or sell these pre-coded tokens to tenants as required.

Will I save money with prepayment electricity?

Not necessarily. Eskom has many different tariffs for various consumers depending on their electricity consumption and other needs. Most residential customers with billed meters (not prepayment) pay a large initial installation cost to get electricity. (This initial cost covers part of the cost for the electricity network like the cables, poles, transformers etc.) These customers then also pay a fixed monthly amount in addition to the actual energy portion that is consumed. Because of these additional amounts, the charge per unit of electricity is lower. For prepayment electricity you only pay for the energy consumed but at a somewhat higher rate.

If you consume little electricity per month a prepayment meter will be more cost effective. However if you use average or higher electricity, the conventional tariffs will be cheaper. Note that an electric water heater (i.e. a geyser) consumes about 60% to 70% of an average small customer's energy. Also visit the Eskom <http://www.eskom.co.za> web page for more information about saving electricity.

There are however other advantages to prepayment:

- Since the prepayment meter provides a continuous display of how much electricity you have left and also a flashing light showing how fast you are using electricity, many customers find it much easier to budget their electricity usage and to actually save power.
- Many customers do not understand the accounts for the billed system or how the amounts are calculated. With the prepayment system you can be sure you will get a Rand's worth of electricity for every Rand you pay.

Where do I get my electricity from?

If you have a prepayment meter you should also have a plastic meter card that you received with your prepayment meter. This card looks like a bank card and it will be dark blue with the Eskom logo on if you receive electricity from Eskom. If your card looks different you probably receive electricity from someone else.

If you receive a monthly bill, it should have the supply authority's name and contact details on.

My meter does not work. Now what?

You must report the problem to your local Eskom office or contact the Eskom National Call centre to report the fault. The Call Centre numbers are on the main Eskom <http://www.eskom.co.za> web page.

Tell me more about electricity.

Please visit the Eskom <http://www.eskom.co.za> site if you have general questions about electricity like electricity generation or distribution. They also provide information via email requests if the information is not available already, (address available on that page).