



ENGIE Prepayment

A Guide to your prepayment meter





An introduction to prepayment

Welcome to prepayment from all of us here at ENGIE. This guide is here to give you lots of information about prepayment meters to make sure you have the best possible experience.

Our prepayment service lets you pay-as-you-go for gas and/or electricity, meaning you can keep control of your energy usage and costs. This guide explains the benefits of having a prepayment meter, and tells you how to get the most from this service. We'll cover things such as:

- What prepayment is.
- What to look out for when topping up your credit.
- How to pay and how the charges are made up.
- Information about your top up card or key.
- What to do if your meter doesn't work or there's an emergency.
- How to get help, if you need assistance.

What is prepayment?

Energy prepayment meters help you to manage your energy use and control spending. They work in a similar way to a prepay phone; you pay for your energy in advance and top up with a key or card.

You can top up your prepayment key or card anywhere you see a PayPoint or PayZone sign.

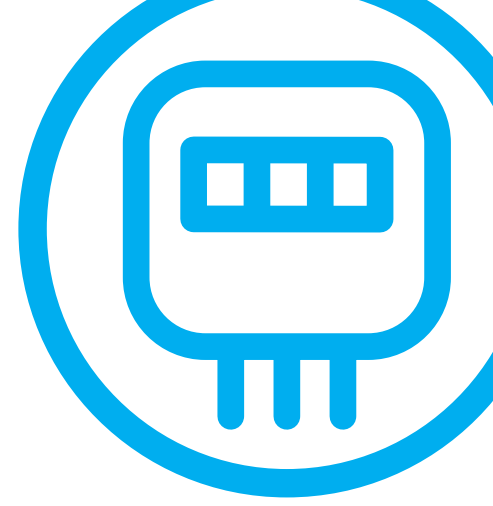
- Stay in control of how much energy you use and how much money you spend.
- Emergency credit facility gives you peace of mind.
- You'll receive an annual statement, confirming your spend, information about your tariff and usage for the previous year.
- Friendly hours – if you ever run out of credit on your electricity meter during 'friendly hours', your supply will continue until the period ends.



Where can you top up?

To top up a prepayment meter you'll need to visit an authorised PayPoint or PayZone outlet, with your payment card or key. You can top up from £1 - £49. All outlets sell credit in whole pounds. Some outlets are open 24 hours a day and you can top up monthly, weekly or more often if you want to. Remember to only buy your credit from these authorised outlets.





A few things you should know about prepayment...

There are some things about prepayment meters that are a little different to a credit meter.

How to get started...

You need to activate your top up key or card on the day of your supply switch. Your switch date will be detailed on your letter with the key or card.

To activate your card or key simply place it in the meter and wait for the beep.

Only use the prepayment key or card supplied by ENGIE, as this is tied to your account. Using a key or card from a different supplier or person will not be credited against your account. Please only use a PayPoint or Payzone outlet to charge your key or card. Always decline any offer to buy prepayment credit on your doorstep.

Keep your meter in credit

First of all, if your meter runs out of credit you risk being without access to electricity or gas.

Remember, all prepayment meters apply a 'standing charge' every day, so even if you don't use any gas or electricity for a day, the meter will still apply a charge.

If you leave home for several days, it's important to make sure you have enough credit on your meter to cover the standing charge while you are away. If you don't have enough before going away, your credit may run out and any appliances you've left on (like freezers or security lights) may switch off.

If your meter runs below a £1 in credit, you can activate your emergency credit by pressing the switch on your meter. This will give you time to purchase more credit, so your energy supply isn't cut off.

Replacement top up key or card

If you need a replacement top up key or card we may charge you for it. Our replacement charges are £5 for a key or £3 for card plus delivery charges.

What is my charge made up of?

Prepayment charges are made up of:

1. A charge for each unit of gas or electricity you use.

2. A fixed charge – which is a set figure per day called a 'Standing Charge'.
3. Any outstanding debt you may need to clear on the meter.
4. Any electricity charges accumulated during 'friendly hours'.

Can I see what I've paid?

We will send you an annual statement at the end of your year with us. **This will have details of:**

- Your costs for the year.
- Your annual consumption.
- Information highlighting if any cheaper tariffs are available with us.
- Your fuel mix – where your energy comes from.
- Details about your tariff and your balance for the year.

If you have any outstanding costs or surplus credit, these will be detailed in your annual statement.

Our electricity 'friendly hours'

If you ever run out of credit on your electricity meter during 'friendly hours', your supply will continue until the 'friendly hours' period ends. The next time you top up you'll need to cover all the costs incurred and any payments missed, this will include:

- The cost of electricity used during 'friendly hours'.
- Emergency credit.
- Any debt repayments.
- Plus at least £1 of standard credit.

Our 'friendly hours' are:

- Each weekday night between 8pm until 8am (Monday to Thursday).
- The weekend from 8pm Friday until 8am Monday.
- All day bank holidays until 8am the following morning.



Prepayment and my situation

Why would I need a prepayment meter?

There are a number of different reasons why having a prepayment meter might be suitable for your situation.

Advantages of prepayment include:

- A prepayment meter allows you to “Pay As You Go” with your energy. It could help you budget gas or electricity spending and keep track of how much you’re actually using.
- If you are having difficulty paying for an electricity bill, a prepayment meter can be set to pay the money you owe at a fixed amount each week.
- You can build up positive credit on your prepayment meter over the warmer months to try and reduce the amount you have to spend in winter.
- If you’re not able to get an energy supply, due to a poor payment record, a prepayment meter can be installed to provide you with a supply of electricity or gas on a Pay As You Go basis.
- An ‘emergency credit’ facility to use in emergencies, when you can’t top up in time. Remember to top this back up to get your energy supply back online.

There may also be reasons why a prepayment meter could not be the best option for you and could cause more issues than being on a traditional meter and supply.

Disadvantages of prepayment.

- You will need to physically access the prepayment meter, to top up or read the display. If you have sight difficulties or other special needs you may find a prepayment meter difficult to use.
- You have to be able to visit a retail outlet to buy credit.
- You’re likely to spend more money in winter as typical energy usage is higher. If you’re on a low income, spreading payments evenly throughout the year may be more suitable for you.
- If your meter is not re-set following a price increase or change in your instalments, debt can build up, which you will have to repay. You must allow us access to the meter to reset it at all reasonable times.
- Paying by prepayment can be more expensive than other payment methods, such as Direct Debit. Please check with us to see whether you’re on our best deal possible for your situation.

A prepayment meter may also not be right for you if you need a continuous supply of energy for health reasons, e.g. any medical equipment you have needs electricity.

Is my property suitable for a prepayment meter?

Whether you’re a new customer joining us for the first time or you’re already with us and you just want to move over to prepayment, we’ll need to check your home is suitable.

Sometimes, we’ll ask you to pay by prepayment meter before you join us. If that happens, we’ll explain why at the time. We may put a prepayment meter in so you can pay back money you owe us.

If this happens, we’ll agree upfront with you how much the meter collects each week, based on what you can afford to pay.

If you move home?

We need you to give us the following information around the time you move out.

Before the day you move out we need:

- Your new address.
- The date you’re moving out.

On the day you move out (or as soon as possible after), we need:

- The meter readings on your meter.
- The amount of unused credit on the meter.

You’ll get a final statement from us, with the amount you have spent to date and the amount of any debt or surplus credit detailed. If you have any questions about this, or think you’re owed a refund for unused credit, please get in touch with us.

You may want to run the balance left on the meter as close to zero as possible before you move out so you don’t waste credit.

If you request a prepayment meter there may be a small charge associated with fitting and transferring from a credit meter.





Some Frequently Asked Questions about PrePay:

Where can I top-up my card or key?

You can top up your prepayment key or card at any PayPoint or Payzone outlet.

What should I do if my electricity key or gas card isn't working?

Make sure there's no dust or dirt on the metal contact or chip and then try again. If your electricity key or gas card is still not working, and it has passed your start date with us, please contact us.

What if I need a replacement card or key?

If your card isn't working, lost or damaged, you'll need a replacement. Contact our Customer care Team on 0800 280 8000, our charges are £5 for a key or £3 for a card plus delivery charges.

What if my electricity or gas supply stops?

Check the meter screen, if you can see an amount followed by 'DEBT', you've run out of credit.

In that event, if you haven't used your emergency credit already, simply put your key back in and push the "emergency credit" button to get the supply back on.

If you've already used your emergency credit then you need to top up with at least £1 more than the debt shown on the meter.

If your supply is off but there's credit on your meter, there could be a wiring problem. In that case, call us during our opening hours (Mon-Fri 8am-5pm or Sat 9am-5pm), or out of these hours, call 105 to contact your local electricity distribution company.

Can I use my friend's prepayment card or key to top up my meter?

No, please don't use anyone else's key or card to buy energy. If you put money on another person's card or key, that payment goes to their account not yours.

Meter not working?

If your prepayment meter isn't working, we'll come and take a look. We won't charge you for the call out if the card, key or meter isn't working, but we may charge you if we visit and everything is OK. We aim to get to you within:

- 3 hours for both fuels if you contact us 8am - 8pm Monday to Friday.
- 4 hours for both fuels if you contact us 9am - 5pm Saturdays.

If we don't make it to you within this time, we'll pay you £30 to recognise we've kept you waiting. If we're late but the meter is working when we arrive, then we won't make a payment. We'll tell you about any charges when you call us.

What if I run out of credit?

If you run out of credit on your gas meter, your gas supply will stop after using your emergency credit until you top up your meter.

If you ever run out of credit on your electricity meter during 'friendly hours', your supply will continue until the 'friendly hours' period ends. The next time you top up you'll need to cover all the costs incurred and any payments missed, this will include:

- The cost of electricity used during friendly hours.
- Emergency credit.
- Any debt repayments.
- Plus at least £1 of standard credit.

If you run out of credit on your electricity meter outside "friendly hours" your electricity supply will stop until you top up your meter.



How do I read my prepayment meter?

Electricity meters:

Press the blue button. This will display various settings each time the button is pressed. On a single rate meter the reading will be on display 'H'. On an Economy 7 meter, the reading displays are 'H' for the day, and 'J' for the night.

Display What it means

- Display A** Current credit / debt
- Display B** Test display only
- Display C** Time & rate in use
- Display D** Date & rate in use
- Display E** Total amount you can add to your meter
- Display F** Standing charge and debt collection
- Display G** Total units used
- Display H** Total units used on rate 1 (Normal on Economy 7 meters (E7))
- Display I** Price per unit on rate 1 (Normal on E7 meter)
- Display J** Total units used on rate 2 (Low on E7 meter)
- Display K** Price per unit on rate 2
- Display R** Your emergency credit (you'll need to have inserted your key or card to see this).
- Display S** Any debt you owe us (you'll need to have inserted your key or card to see this).
- Display T** Your debt charge per week (you'll need to have inserted your key or card to see this)

What can I use the emergency credit for?

Emergency credit (£5 per meter) is there to keep your gas and electricity on until you have chance to add credit to your meter. Usually it lasts for about 3 days, but of course, that's all dependent on how much energy you use.

You have to replace any emergency credit that you use in full prior to being reconnected. The next time you buy credit you'll have to get enough to cover the emergency credit used and keep your supply on. Remember, there is a minimum top up fee of £1.

What happens if I'm away for a long time?

If you don't use your meter for 30 days or more then we may ask you to contact us so we can check that everything is ok, that you still have your card or key and that you still want to use the meter.

Gas meters:

Older meters usually have the reading on the front of the meter. For newer meters, press button 'A' until 'meter index' is displayed on the screen – the figures next to this will be the meter reading.

Display What it means

- 00** Purchased credit on meter
- 01** Last amount of purchased credit that was taken for arrears
- 02** Last amount of purchased credit that was taken to repay emergency credit
- 03** Last amount purchased allocated for gas
- 17** Standing Charge
- 21** Amount of credit that must be on the meter before emergency credit may be offered
- 22** Amount of emergency credit that will be offered
- 26** The maximum repayment that will be made in 1 week for debt. (Card must be inserted in meter)
- 27** Current gas arrears. (Card must be inserted in meter)

Why do I have outstanding debt or credit when I have a prepayment meter?

Prepayment accounts can show a debt or a credit for the following reasons:

- Your meter readings have been estimated on a previous credit meter.
- Your payments haven't been added to your account.
- You've been sent a refund in error (via cheque or to your bank account).
- An incorrect amount was set to collect on your meter.
- Your meter hasn't been set with the correct prices.

If you think the debt or credit is incorrect, try to find out this information before contacting us:

- Your meter balance, the meter reading and when you last topped-up.
- A recent statement with the details of your payment
- Your last top up receipt.



Tampering with a meter

Warning: It is dangerous to tamper with any kind of gas or electricity meter. It's also a serious criminal offence.

Only a qualified authorised engineer should work on your meter. If we believe your meter's been tampered with, we can disconnect the supply. We will try to recover the cost of any energy that we believe hasn't been paid for and also the cost of repair to the meter.

What happens if ENGIE change the prices?

If we need to increase our prices, we'll write to you at least 30 days before the changes happen. We might announce price cuts in a different way, but we'll always put any and all changes on our website straight away.

The displays on your prepayment meter will always show you the rates you're being charged.

If you're not happy with the changes, you have the right to switch to another supplier – though of course we'd be sorry to see you go. In that case, your new supplier must get in touch with us no later than 20 days after the price change takes effect to notify us that they're taking over your supply (or you'll be charged at the new charges until you do move).

It may even be possible to transfer an outstanding balance you owe us to them.

How do I switch to ENGIE?

We will need to ask you a few quick questions before we switch you to our supply. You can switch to us online, or if you'd prefer to talk to someone about switching to us, call 0800 280 8000.

Can I change my prepayment meter for a credit meter instead?

If you would like your prepayment meter removed, you'll need to pass a credit check, set up a fixed monthly Direct Debit and clear any outstanding balance on your account. **To discuss exchanging your meters, please contact us.**

Why am I still getting bills when I have a prepayment meter?

We still have to send you a statement at least once a year, to show you the charges for any energy used, and also details of any payments made to your account. If you have any outstanding costs this will be detailed on your annual statement.

What if I'm struggling to pay for my energy?

If you're struggling to pay for your energy then don't worry, **we're here to help!**

We will come to an agreement to help you get back on top of things, if we can. If an accredited money advice company is helping you, we'll listen to what they say when we're working out how you can pay off an outstanding balance to us.

Your meter could be disconnected if you don't get in touch when you have difficulties, so remember to contact us.


If you smell gas

Don't use a phone near a suspected gas leak, but call the 24-hour national gas emergency service immediately.

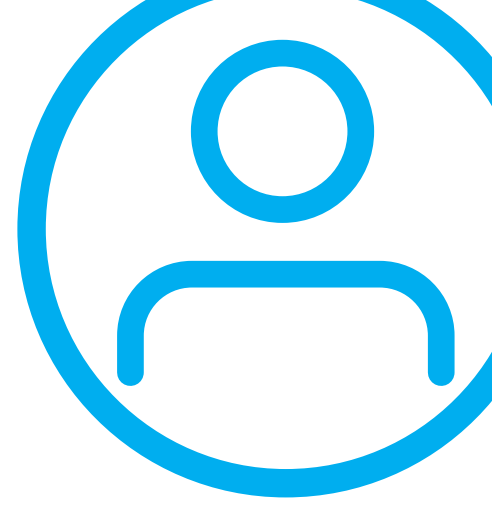
- Open all the doors and windows to clear the gas.
- Check to see if the gas has been left on or a pilot light has gone out.
- Turn the main gas tap on the pipe leading into the meter to the 'OFF' position.
- Turn off the gas meter at the valve. If you're unsure how to do this, call the gas emergency service.
- **DON'T use any electrical appliances or turn on any switches.**
- **DON'T use a mobile phone, DON'T smoke, DON'T use matches or naked flames.**
- **DON'T leave it to someone else to call** – you could be putting yourself or others at risk.

Important contact information: National Gas Emergency Service: 0800 111 999.

If there's no electricity

- Check the screen on your meter. If you can see an amount followed by 'DEBT' then you've run out of credit.
- If you haven't used your emergency credit, put your key back in and push the emergency credit button to get the supply back on.
- If you've already used your emergency credit, then you need to top up with at least £1 more than the debt shown on the meter. If your supply is off but there's credit on your meter, it could be a wiring fault. Check your trip switches.
- If you're not sure how to do this or the fault re-occurs or the trip switch fails to re-set, contact a qualified electrician. If there's no display when you press the blue button, it may be a power cut. Call 105 to contact your local electricity distribution company. 

We're here to help



Sometimes it's tough to stay ahead of all the bills. If you're finding it hard to pay, please contact us as soon as you can. We really do want to help.

If you're struggling to pay your bills, then we'll try and come to an agreement that'll help you get back on top of things. If an accredited money advice agency is helping you, we'll listen to what they say when we're working out how you can pay-off an outstanding balance to us.

Don't forget, your meter could be disconnected if you don't get in touch when you have difficulties, so please let us know in good time.

If you'd like some independent advice, these national organisations can help you talk through any of the topics covered in this guide:

National Debtline

Call on 0808 808 4000

visit www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Citizens advice

www.adviceguide.org.uk

Energy Saving Tips

One of the best ways to save money on your bill is to use less energy. For tips on lowering how much energy you use check out our guide <https://home.engie.co.uk/help/policies/energy-saving-advice/>.

Supporting Vulnerable Customers

We all need a little extra help now and then, and we want to make sure it's there when you need it. We have a number of special services available for people who need them.

If you, or someone living with you, are:

- of pensionable age;
- registered disabled, have long term ill-health or are medically dependent on your energy supply;
- sight or hearing impaired;
- a child under 5 years.

contact us to be added to our **Priority Services Register** for help and special services at no extra charge on 0800 280 8000 help.uk@engie.com.

What is the Priority Services Register?

The Priority Services Register allows you to register your name with us so we're aware of who may be in need of a little extra support. This allows us to identify any extra services we may be able to offer you and make sure you're taken care of in the event of an emergency such as a power cut.

For more information visit <https://home.engie.co.uk/help/policies/supporting-vulnerable-customers/>.

Contact Us

☎ 0800 280 8000

✉ help.uk@engie.com

Opening times

Mon to Fri 8am-8pm

Sat 9am-5pm

