

TIME-OF-USE (TOU) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



When it comes to protecting our state's natural resources, we must work together. To do this, it's important to understand that *when* we use electricity is just as important as *how much* electricity we use. In order to achieve our state's energy goal of reducing our carbon pollution to 1990 levels by 2030, we must all do our part.

What is Time-Of-Use (TOU) and a TOU rate plan?

During peak hours, between 4 p.m. – 9 p.m.* cleaner energy is less abundant. TOU rate plans are designed to encourage consumers to use less electricity during peak hours in order to reduce the use of non-renewable energy. By shifting electricity use outside of peak hours, Californians can make greater use of cleaner energy resources like wind and solar power.

Reducing your electricity use during peak hours and shifting some of your electricity use to off-peak hours may lower your bill. Off-peak is anytime outside of 4 p.m. – 9 p.m.*

Contact your local electricity provider for information on TOU and other rate plans available in your area.

What are peak hours?

Peak hours are when Californians are using the most electricity each day, usually between the hours of 4 p.m. – 9 p.m.* This is because more people are using electricity in the evening hours to cook dinner, cool and light homes, and use appliances and devices that consume large amounts of energy, such as televisions, dishwashers, and laundry machines.

When do TOU rate plans go into effect?

TOU rate plans are available now. For customers on a tiered rate, SCE and PG&E began a rolling transition to TOU in Fall 2020 and will continue through early 2022. Your electricity provider will be sending you notifications in advance of the transition with specifics about rate options that could work for you.

Contact your local electricity provider for information on rate plans.

Why should I participate in a TOU rate plan?

To help California “Keep it Golden”, we need to continue using more clean energy when it’s available, during off-peak hours. It’s a good idea to adjust your habits in order to shift your electricity use to off-peak hours when cleaner energy is more plentiful.

Californians can help reduce air pollution by using cleaner energy. We must work together to protect our natural resources for Californians today and tomorrow!

If helping the environment and saving energy and money sounds good to you, consider reviewing your TOU rate options and changing when you use electricity. Most electricity providers have TOU rates that Californians can choose from at any time.

What can I do to save energy during peak hours?

Californians can take steps to shift or reduce electricity use during peak hours and help minimize environmental impact, including:

- TURN OFF LIGHTS YOU AREN’T USING: Indoor and outdoor lighting consume a lot of electricity. Switch things off when not needed, especially during peak hours.
- ADJUST YOUR THERMOSTAT: Adjust your thermostat a few degrees during peak times in the summer and winter.
- HOLD A HOUSE MEETING: Let household members know that electricity is more expensive during peak times and ask for everyone to join in to decide what to power down if it isn’t needed.
- DO MORE DURING THE DAY: Do household chores, like laundry, cooking, and washing dishes during the day when energy is cheaper and cleaner.
- DIM YOUR SCREEN: Save electricity by dimming your screen. Higher brightness uses more electricity; therefore, turning down your brightness will reduce the amount of electricity you use.

Is TOU a California-only initiative?

Other states across the nation, such as Arizona, Illinois, Maryland, Mississippi, and New York, have similar TOU rate plans. Their goal is the same as California’s: to maximize the use of cleaner sources of energy.

What is considered a cleaner energy source?

In short, any energy source that doesn't rely on fossil fuels is considered clean. Solar and wind energy are two examples that are being used more frequently.

What are the benefits of cleaner energy?

By using cleaner energy, we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help fight poor air quality and climate change, while protecting our environment.

What are the personal benefits of saving electricity during peak hours?

It may be possible to save money by shifting electricity use to lower-priced, off-peak hours, and doing your part to have a more reliable grid for the future. Check with your local electricity provider for more information on which rate options are good for you.

My bill is much higher than family/friends in other parts of the state. Why is that?

Electricity bills depend on each customer's electricity use and management, and their individual electricity provider's rate plans. Better energy practices can help to lower electricity bills.

* Check with your local electricity provider as peak hours may vary.



Interested in finding out if a Time-Of-Use (TOU) plan
is right for you or how you can opt in?

Contact your electricity provider to learn more.