

Economy 7

For heating and hot water

Economy 7, is an electricity tariff that means you pay a different price for your electricity at different times of day, a bit like on-peak and off-peak phone calls.

With Economy 7, the electricity you use at night costs about a third of the price of the electricity you use during the day – a big difference. The hours of cheap electricity are normally from 12 midnight until 07.00 in winter, and from 01.00 to 08.00 in summer, although this can vary between suppliers.

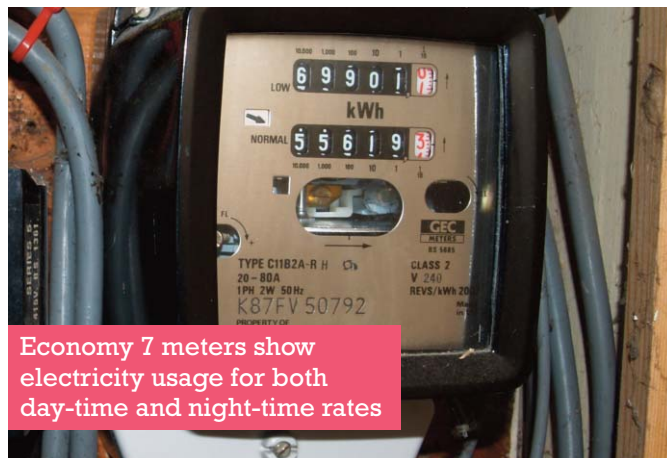
Economy 7 tariffs use a different kind of electricity meter, which, unlike a standard meter, can track the electricity you use during the day and at night separately.

Is Economy 7 right for me?

Whilst Economy 7 gives you seven hours of cheap electricity at night, the downside is that for the other 17 hours the electricity costs more than normal – higher than the standard tariff rate. This suits certain customers, but not others. If you are paying more for your day-time electricity, you should think about running appliances like your washing machine and dishwasher at night.

Tips for saving money if you're on an Economy 7 electricity tariff

- Use appliances like dishwashers, washing machines and tumble dryers at night when electricity is cheaper. You could buy timers for them if this helps.
- Similarly, if possible, set the timer on your hot water tank so that the immersion heater comes on during the night, even if you use the hot water during the day.
- Consider investing in a 'slow cooker'; they use far less electricity than an oven.
- Use a microwave instead of the electric hob where possible.
- Fit energy-saving light bulbs where possible.



Economy 7 meters show electricity usage for both day-time and night-time rates

Photo: NiteUK

As a rule of thumb Economy 7 will be cost-effective if you use electricity (not gas, which is a much cheaper heating fuel) for your heating and hot water, and if you use more than 80% of your electricity at night.

For this to be the case you're almost certainly using electric **storage heaters** (inset picture) for warming the house and have a hot water tank that is heated by electricity. This is because both storage heaters and hot water tanks can be timed to use cheap, night-time electricity and store this as heat until needed during the day.



If you heat your home and water with electricity, but don't have storage heaters or a hot water tank, Economy 7 probably won't be cost effective for you.

If you are on an Economy 7 tariff, your electricity bill will show a day-rate and a night-rate.

Your electricity meter will likewise show two sets of numbers, one marked 'low' and one marked 'normal', or else there may be a set of figures marked 'day rate' and a red button, which you press to get your night reading. If you are in any doubt whether or not you are on Economy 7, call your electricity supplier.



Economy 7 could suit you if you live off the gas network and can use lots of electricity at night

Turn over for energy saving tips ▶



Tips for lower energy bills

Happy paying your gas and electricity supplier more money than you need to?

Thought not. Here are 15 ways to cut your bills ...

1) Keep the oven door shut as much as possible; every time you open it, nearly a quarter of the heat escapes.



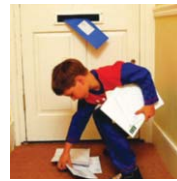
2) Give your clothes a day in the sun; and give your tumble drier a break. Clothes dried in the fresh air feel great, and there are drying days in winter, too.

3) Food in the oven cooks faster when the air inside flows freely, so don't put foil on the racks.

4) Don't leave your phone on charge all night. It only needs three hours – and try not to leave the TV and other kit on stand-by.

5) Be a friend to your freezer. Defrost it regularly to help it run more efficiently.

6) Catch 'em young. Encourage your children to switch off electric toys and lights that they're not using. They'll soon get the hang of saving energy.



7) Dodge the draught!

Fit draught-excluders to your front door, letter box and key hole, and draw your curtains at dusk to keep the heat in.

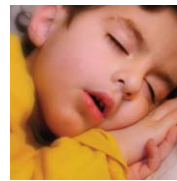
8) When boiling water, only fill the kettle with as much as you'll actually use (but make sure you cover the metal element at the base).

9) Buying a new TV, washing machine or dishwasher? Look out for the Energy Saving Trust 'recommended' logo, and remember: the bigger the TV, the more energy it'll use.



10) Dimmer is smarter. Use your dimmer switches to reduce the amount of energy used to light your room.

11) Wait until you have a full load before putting on a wash. Two half-loads use more energy (and water) than one full load.



12) Sleep tight. Make sure all the lights are turned off when you go to bed, or use a low-wattage night light if you do need to leave one on.

13) Turn your heating down by 1 degree. You'll hardly notice the change in temperature, but it'll make a big difference to your heating bill.

14) Put your fridge in a good spot. Somewhere the air can circulate behind it, but not next to a cooker or radiator.

15) New computer? Remember a laptop typically uses around 85% less energy than a new desktop PC.



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Charity: 298740
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Our **Home Energy Team** offers free advice on domestic energy use to householders in Bristol and Somerset (including the unitary authorities of North Somerset and Bath & North East Somerset).



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