



Factsheet

Monitor your energy use

Common energy-measuring devices for your home

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Advanced meters and energy monitors can tell you how much energy you use and empower you to make informed choices or change your habits.

Energy monitors can give insight into your household energy use or which appliances are inefficient. The one you choose will depend on what you are trying to measure, and whether the cost of the energy monitor will outweigh the savings.

Network advanced meters

Network advanced meters, sometimes called smart meters, are used to measure your electricity use and allow your retailer to send a bill. With an advanced meter, you can view your household's energy use through a smartphone app or via an online portal, typically provided by your electricity retailer.

If you don't have an advanced meter, in some circumstances you can request an upgrade, although there may be a cost.

For more information about advanced meters contact your electricity retailer.

Smart home systems with energy monitoring

Some smart home systems can monitor energy use. These systems control the electrical circuits in the home, and you can use a smartphone or display to control lights, air conditioners and other appliances.

These systems must be installed by a qualified electrician and can be costly.

Energy monitors alone won't reduce your energy use, but the information they give can help you use less.

Meter box energy monitors

Meter box energy monitors provide information on the total energy use of the home. They:

- are usually easy to install;
- read the energy use information collected by your digital household meter;
- display energy use via a smartphone app or digital display;
- may tell you when your energy use is high; and
- may compare the power cost of different tariffs.

Not all meter box energy monitors measure solar production and in some cases two monitors could be required to measure both solar production and energy use.

Meter box energy monitors are available for purchase online.



Power point energy monitors

These devices are also called power meters or energy meters. They fit between the appliance and power socket and tell you the energy use or cost of running an appliance.

Power point energy monitors show which appliances have a high energy cost so you can limit their use.

They are available as “smart plugs” with energy monitoring or energy monitors with a display.

Smart plugs with energy monitoring:

- display energy use on a smartphone app;
- may allow you to switch appliances on and off using the app or through your virtual home assistant.



Smart plug with energy monitoring - Image courtesy of Arlec



Energy monitor with a display - Image courtesy of Arlec

Energy monitors with a display show energy use and/or cost on the monitor.

Both types of power point energy monitors are available online and in local department, electrical and hardware stores.

These monitors are relatively inexpensive and can be moved to different appliances. If you want to continuously measure the energy use of multiple appliances you will need to purchase multiple monitors.

Which energy monitor is best for me?

Each energy monitor has pros and cons, so consider the features of each type before you buy one.

Display type

Does the monitor show your energy use on a smartphone app or a stand-alone display? Display versions may have less features, but you don't need to download an app or have an internet connection.

What is measured

Think about your energy goals, and whether you want to track:

- electricity use;
- electricity cost;
- solar production;
- carbon profile;
- total energy use of the household; or
- energy use of individual appliances.

Other features

Devices that allow you to switch off appliances remotely or on a timer may help you to change your habits.

Summary of the features of energy monitors

	Network smart meter	Smart home with energy monitoring	Meter box energy monitor	Power point energy monitor
Cost	Contact your electricity retailer	Contact your electrician	\$100-\$300	\$20-\$40
Display	Via smartphone or tablet app / portal	Via smartphone or tablet app, or LED display	Via smartphone or tablet app, or LED display	Via smartphone or tablet app, or LED display
Measures	Energy use of your entire house	Varies based on the system used	Energy use of your entire house	Energy use of an individual appliance
“Smart” features to switch appliances on or off	No	Yes	No	Some styles, but only the appliance/s they connect to
Installation	Electricity retailer	Qualified electrician	Self-install	Self-install

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