

## Are you battling to afford electricity for your home?

Free basic municipal services are services provided at no charge by the Government to poor households. The services currently include water and electricity. The general rule is that indigent households are entitled to 6 kl of free water per household per month and 50 kWh of free electricity per household per month. These services are provided by municipalities and include a minimum amount of electricity, water and sanitation that is sufficient to cater for the basic needs of a poor household.

Only indigent households (who can prove that they cannot pay and who earn less than a certain amount per month) qualify for free basic services. Municipalities have criteria to qualify for indigent status. Municipalities determine their own categories of subsidies. In some municipalities, households qualify for 100% subsidies while others qualify for less than 100% depending on the criteria set.



### Free basic electricity – what can you do with it?

Most municipalities and Eskom provide Free Basic Electricity to low-income households – mostly to those households that consume below 350-450 kWh of electricity per month only. The free electricity is given on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month. Some municipalities give 50 kWh free electricity and some give 100 kWh.

FBE users who have pre-paid meters will be able to see when their free electricity is finished and will then have to buy more electricity

If you do not receive FBE yet, go to your local municipality and register for FBE. You can claim your FBE token by dialing [\\*130\\*269#](tel:*130*269#) from your mobile phone or contact your local municipality to find out if you qualify and how to apply. Just note that they only give FBE to people who earn less than a certain amount per month.

### What can you power at home for 50 kWh in a month?

Appliance	Watts	Number	Hours used per month	kWh
Energy saving lightbulbs (Evening)	11	4	3.00	0.13
Energy saving lightbulbs (Morning)	11	4	1.00	0.04
TV	35	1	3.00	0.11
Iron	1000	1	0.04	0.04
Hotplate	2000	1	0.50	1.00
Kettle	1200	1	0.10	0.12
Cellphone charger	15	1	24.00	0.36
Fridge	250	1	0.22	0.05

## Buy less and save more

Just remember that Eskom charges a price for electricity and municipalities charge different prices, mostly more than Eskom. This is because the municipalities need the money from electricity sales to provide other services such as refuse removal and sanitation.

The cheapest Eskom prepaid tariffs are:

- Homelight 20 Amp
- Homelight 60 Amp

The more electricity you buy, the more expensive it becomes per unit. It works the same for water prices – the more you use, the more expensive it gets. So never buy too much electricity at a time – like R1 000, because then you pay more per unit of electricity and the units will not last so long. It is cheaper to buy just enough the month and then maybe buy a little later in the month if needed. Let us explain this below:

Below are the Eskom rates (municipalities may charge more)

Homelight 20A	Energy charge [c/kWh]	
	VAT excl	VAT incl
<b>Block 1</b> [> 0 - 350 kWh]	121.67	139.92
<b>Block 2</b> [> 350 kWh]	137.86	158.54

If you buy up to 350kWh of electricity a month, you will pay the rate of block 1 – R1.28 per unit. If you buy more than 350kWh you will pay a higher rate as indicated in block 2 – R1.45 per unit. If your first purchase in the month is more than 350kWh, then the 350kWh is charged at the rate of block 1 and the additional units is charged at the rate of block 2. You can buy more than once in the same month but the units will then be charged at the rate of block 2 only.

Homelight 60A	Energy charge [c/kWh]	
	VAT excl	VAT incl
<b>Block 1</b> [> 0 - 600 kWh]	137.70	158.36
<b>Block 2</b> [>600 kWh]	234.06	269.17

Please note that the tariff resets on the first of every month, so on the first of the month you can buy up to 350kWh again at the rate of block 1.

The tariff works exactly like Homelight 20A, the only difference is the number of units in block 1 goes up to 600kWh and the units in block 2 is anything more than 600kWh. The rate per block is also a bit more expensive. To keep your electricity costs under control, you should use electricity efficiently to avoid moving into the higher consumption block and subsequently the higher rate.

## Buy prepaid vouchers from legal vendors

The ghost vendors use legitimate Eskom devices to illegally distribute electricity vouchers, and pocket the money.

How do you know you are buying from an illegal vendor? They will, for example, give you R200 worth of electricity units for R100. A legal vendor will have a vendor identification sticker or sign on their premises and only sell the correct amount of electricity for the amount paid for

Buying illegal electricity vouchers is a crime and is punishable by law. Those found using illegal prepaid electricity vouchers can face disconnection, fines and even legal prosecution. Please do not buy electricity from ghost vendors and report these illegal vendors to Eskom or your local municipality.

Why make criminals rich? Rather buy legally so that Eskom and the municipalities can use that money to keep your electricity network working and do upgrades when necessary.

Report electricity theft anonymously by sending a detailed SMS tip-off to Crime Line on 32211 or contact Eskom's Contact Centre on **08600 37566** (24hrs).

### Here is a list of legal online vendors:

**A2Pay** is a registered wholesaler of Eskom prepaid electricity to existing Prepaid Electricity vending platforms. In addition, A2Pay provides a robust end-to-end retail platform to empower the Informal Retailer while offering the consumer more convenience

**CiGiCell** including **Prepaid24** (Buy prepaid electricity online via electronic funds transfer.(EFT) from your home or office 24/7, or register from cell phone on the pp24mobi site: [www.pp24.mobi](http://www.pp24.mobi) and transact within minutes)

the **Powertime** web site enables customers to easily buy prepaid electricity, prepaid airtime and pay their municipal bills, online or from their phone: [m.powertime.co.za](http://m.powertime.co.za)

**Contour Technology** (Buy prepaid electricity online via your banking profile, including using cellphone or via an ATM – 24hr real time service. It's easy, safe and secure and you get your tokens within minutes. Register your meter number on **36073** or via website:

[www.wireit.co.za](http://www.wireit.co.za)

**EasyPay** (Shoprite pay points as well as via internet [www.easypay.co.za](http://www.easypay.co.za) and cell phone vending and also through **myPrepaid**)

**Flash Mobile** vend at several Spar and **PEP cell** outlets

**Ontec (previously Itron)**

**Qhakaza Amps**

**Sandulela Technologies** including **Prepaid24**



## Applying for electricity

Call our 24-hour Contact Centre at 08600ESKOM (or 0860037566) to make an application, if you fall within an Eskom supply area. If you do not live within an Eskom supply area the Agent will tell you to go to your nearest municipality to apply for electricity.

## Save electricity by using it efficiently

The general rule is – the more heat an appliance generates, the more electricity it uses. So, for example, the hot water geyser uses the most electricity in most homes. Other appliances such as stoves, heaters, tumble dryers, kettles and microwave ovens also use a lot of electricity.

When you are at home, you spend most of your time in your living areas and bedrooms. Here is how to save electricity in these areas:

- Always **switch off lights** if nobody is in a room.
- **Unplug** all appliances you are **not using**.
- **Don't leave computers, TVs, and iPads on standby** – if you do, these appliances use up to 15% of the power they normally use when on.
- Keep **curtains and blinds open during the day** to let in natural light so that you don't have to switch on lights.

## Bathroom

- **Shower** - don't bath – showering uses a lot less water.
- Keep it hot and short – **limit your shower time** to seven minutes or the length of your favourite song.
- **Don't leave taps running** while brushing your teeth or washing your face – use a cup of water to rinse your mouth and fill the basin with just enough water to rinse the soap off your hands and face.



## Use fridges/freezers smartly

- Set your **fridge at 3°C**.
- Make sure the **seals** of your fridge and freezer doors **are not broken**.
- **Don't open fridge/freezer doors unnecessarily**.
- **Place your fridge/freezer somewhere cool** - away from sun-facing walls and windows, and as far as possible from the stove.
- **Defrost your chest freezer** twice a year and your upright freezer three times a year.
- **Don't overfill** your fridge or freezer; only **use 90% of its capacity**.

## Save electricity by using it efficiently



## Use stoves and ovens smartly

- Keep your **oven door closed** until food is cooked.
- **Match pots with stove plate sizes** – small pot on small plates.
- **Avoid** using your **stove for small tasks** - like boiling water for tea and coffee.
- **Place frozen food in the fridge to defrost** - avoid defrosting food in the microwave.
- Use your **microwave to cook small** to medium amounts of food.
- Use a **pressure cooker** or slow cooker for food that cooks for a long time - such as **stews and casseroles**.

## Use lights smartly

- **Replace old incandescent lamps** with **energy saving CFLs** (compact fluorescent lamps) and **LEDs** (light emitting diodes) - do the same with your conventional downlights
- **CFLs use up to 80% less energy** than incandescent lamps and last up to eight times longer
- **LEDs use up to 85% less energy** than conventional incandescent lamps and about 5% less than CFLs

## Savings tips for this winter

- **Switch off your geyser between 5pm and 9pm**; as this appliance is one of the highest electricity consumers in your home and can account for **up to 30% of your electricity bill**
- **Do not switch on your electric space heaters between 5pm and 9pm**; they are energy-intensive and can account for **up to 17% of your evening peak consumption** – rather dress warmly and use hot water bottles and blankets to keep warm. When using heaters, only heat the rooms that you're spending time in.

# Use electricity safely

Here are some electricity safety tips to get you started:

- Make sure that your antennas (aerial), whether for television or for the radio, are away from power lines.
- Teach your kids not to fly kites near power lines.
- Ensure that none of your electricity outlets are exposed to water.
- Do not insert foreign objects into electrical appliances – don't use a knife to lift bread from the toaster.
- Never change a light bulb without first making sure that the power is switched off.
- If you see sparks or smoke from an electrical appliance, it is telling you that something is wrong. Unplug it and call an electrician.
- Do not work on an electrical appliance unless you know exactly what you are doing and have made sure it is not plugged in.
- When cleaning your house, do not use water near any plugs or electrical cords.

### Electrical Fires in the home:

Fires caused by electricity are more common than you think. With everyone at home during the lockdown, you need to **pay extra attention** to issues that pose a threat. Electricity safety is **#FamilySafetyValues**



Here are some **tips to avoid electrical fires** and **what to do** if there is a fire:

- ✗ It's always better to prevent rather than cure. Do not use your electrical cords in a way that the insulation protection is damaged. **Damage to the cords is a fire hazard** because it can short out and make sparks.
- ! It's always better to prevent rather than cure. If the **outer casing of electrical cords is damaged, replace the cord immediately or stop using that appliance** until you can replace the cord. Cords and wires that are **not properly insulated** are a fire hazard.
- ! Get all your electrical appliances, plug sockets and electrical services done by a **qualified electrician** to prevent work that causes faults or can become a fire hazard.
- ✗ **NEVER** use water to put the fire out. It is best to use substances such as **sand, flour or mealie meal**. If there are any conductors such as water or material made of silver, do not touch.
- ✓ **Call emergency services** as soon as possible.

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### Water conducts electricity:

During the lockdown you might have a house full of people on your hands. This means you might have some **water spills** here and there, or kids who may want to take a last dip in the pool before winter. Electricity safety is **#FamilySafetyValues**

Here are a few **water and electricity** tips to keep top of mind:

- ! Before wiping water puddles dry near electrical appliances, **unplug the appliance first** to avoid getting shocked.
- ✗ While it is good to wash your hands often, **avoid touching plugs and sockets with wet hands**. Even if it's so yank out something quickly, dry your hands first.
- ✗ Water guns are great toys but the **water should never be aimed at powerlines or electrical sockets**.
- ✓ **Always have all pumps and lights** in a swimming pool installed and maintained by a certified electrician.
- ✓ **Never use electrical appliances near water** – so keep toasters away from the sink in the kitchen and don't use appliances such as radios in the bathroom.

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## Safety tips when using electricity at home or at the work place

- Never attach too many plugs to one socket.
- Do not pass electric cords from one room to another through hinges of doors or windows where they can be squashed or damaged.
- Do not use any electrical appliances in your bathroom as water and electricity are a very dangerous combination.
- Ensure danger cords on appliances are replaced immediately.
- Never pull out a plug by its cord.
- Putting electrical wires directly into a socket can cause a serious accident.
- Never touch exposed or low hanging power cables.

If you have identified an unsafe and/or illegal connection, call our Eskom Customer Contact Centre on **08600 37566**, provide as much accurate details as possible, such as the actual location or address or the closest pole number.

## Eskom contact details

**National Share-call Number**  
**08600 ESKOM or 08600 37566**

Please have the following ready before you call:  
Account number, meter number, pole number,  
address details and your contact details.

**Customer Services Email**  
[customerservices@eskom.co.za](mailto:customerservices@eskom.co.za)

**National SMS Number 35328**

The SMS message must include a valid account number, premises identification or stand number, meter number, or pole number for successful delivery.

**Fax number 086 243 7566**