



Energy Smart Challenge

This week's Energy Action: Understand your energy usage patterns

Begin by logging on to your energy provider's online account and reviewing your energy usage over the last year, or however long you've lived in your current home.

Step 1: Get oriented.

How much of your bill is gas versus electric? (It's more accurate to compare actual usage amounts instead of costs, since rates vary. For NWE users: the "usage history" tab under "my energy account" makes this easy.)

Last month: Gas = _____ *therms* Electric = _____ *kWh*

What patterns do you notice?

How much energy do you use in the winter compared with the summer?

Step 2: Calculate your approximate annual usage of electricity (measured in Kilowatt-hours, or kWh) and natural gas (measured in therms). Simply add up the last 12 months' numbers under "usage history" to get the total annual amount. If you don't have data for the last 12 months, add the highest and lowest months and divide by 2 to get an average, then multiply that number by 12 months.

Annual energy usage:

Gas = _____ *therms* Electric = _____ *kWh* Total \$ amount = _____

Step 3: How does your home stack up? Compare your annual usage to Montana averages. Montana households use an average of 10,320 kWh/year of electricity and 1150 therms of natural gas.

	Montana Household Average	Your Household average
Electricity use per year	10,320 kWh	kWh
Natural gas use per year	1150 therms	therms

Go a step FURTHER: Calculate your average daily usage of electricity (Kilowatt-hours or kWh) and natural gas (therms) for your highest month so far and your lowest month. On Northwestern Energy bills, this number should be right on the first page. On other bills, you might need to calculate it yourself. Just divide the "billed therms" (or kWh) by the number of days in the billing period.

Billed therms or kWh / #of days in billing period = average daily use

Average daily usage for your highest month:

Gas = _____ *therms* Electric = _____ *kWh* Total \$ amount = _____

Average daily usage for your lowest month:

Gas = _____ *therms* Electric = _____ *kWh* Total \$ amount = _____

What if I don't get my utility bill?!

If your landlord pays your utilities, or you pay a fixed fee each month as part of your rent, you can still get the basic picture of your energy usage, even if you don't see your monthly bill. It can't hurt to try asking your landlord to send you a copy of a few bills or tell you how much energy you use (if you do this, let us know how it goes!). Here are some guides to help you evaluate your home energy use.

Go to: **NorthWestern Energy - Home Energy Calculator online** to get a detailed analysis of your home energy use, how much your bill probably cost, what your usage looks like, etc. Or answer the questions below.

What do you have control over?

What information do you have access to?

Make an inventory of your major appliances:

Appliance	Make/Model/Size	Gas or Electric	How many hours per day is it used/plugged in?
Refrigerator			
Freezer			
Stove/oven			
Dishwasher			
Washer			
Dryer			

What type of heating and cooling system is in your home?

What time of water heater is in your home?

What is your usual thermostat setting? Do you use a programmable thermostat?

What type of lights do you have? Which ones are used the most? How many hours per day are they on?

What other appliances and electronics do you use? Think anything you plug into an outlet....

Appliance	Type	Size or quantity	On average how many hours is it on/used per day?
Laptop/Computer			
TV			
Streaming box/device			
Game console			
Mobile phone charger			
Lamps			
String lights			

Notes

Questions? Comments? Let us know your thoughts! And don't forget to invite your friends, family, and neighbors to join the Energy Smart Challenge.

Contact us at info@climatesmartmissoula.org and visit us online for more smart stuff:

www.missoulaclimate.org





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