



# TROUBLE-SHOOTING A “HIGH BILL”

Do you think your power bill is too high?  
If so, use these 10 steps to find out why.

**10 STEPS TO RESOLUTION:** Here are the steps to resolving a high bill issue. These steps are numbered in order of importance based upon actual prior experience solving customer problems. Those at the bottom of the list are seldom the cause of the problem. Answer these questions to fully understand the usage of electricity in your home.

## 1. ACCURATE HISTORY

Get an accurate kilowatt hour history on the account: for the last 12 months if possible. Ask Grayson RECC for help with this information.

## 2. TRUE ELECTRICITY BILL

Check to be sure this is just an electric bill. Are there other charges beyond electric service? Have arrears been added to the total? Are there miscellaneous charges added to the bill (environmental charges and increases in fuel and taxes)? Any security light charges? How about the fees, financing charges, etc.?

## 3. DAYS OF USAGE

Check days of usage. Is the number of days greater than other months in question because of meter readings? Is your daily average significantly different from other months in question?

## 4. COMPARE WINTER TO SUMMER

Check the kilowatt-hour total by month. From the history, are the winter months higher, indicating some form of electric heat? Do the summer months indicate air conditioning?

## 5. LIST APPLIANCES

Begin a list of appliances in the home. This list is important to you because most customers believe each appliance uses the same amount of electricity. That's the reason we say: "There's no way I can use this much electricity!"

## 6. PROBE THE LIST

Probe the list in the order (based on greatest usage)

- Electric Heat in Winter central furnace  
20kw per hour = \$2.13
- Portable heaters  
1.5 kwh per hour = \$.10 per hour
- Heat Pump  
6.2 kwh per hour to heat = \$ .66 hour  
4.5 kwh per hour cool = \$.48 per hour
- Air Conditioner window unit  
2.5 kwh = \$.26 per hour
- Electric Water Heater 4 persons  
400 kwh (40 Gallon Tank) = \$40.00
- Well Pump  
1 kwh per hour running = \$.10
- Freezer  
200 kwh per month = \$20.00
- Refrigerator  
180 kwh per month + \$19.00

- Dryer  
4.5 kwh per hour = .48 per hour
- Fan on gas furnace  
about \$.10 per hour

## **7. "I WAS GONE HALF THE MONTH"**

It is unnecessary to go any further with the list. All other appliances in normal usage will contribute very little to a monthly bill, most customers do not realize the lights TV radio, etc. amount to less than \$10.00 per month on their bill.

## **WERE THE FREEZER AND REFRIGERATOR LEFT ON?**

- 8.** If you were gone away, did you have the freezer and refrigerator empty and turned off: Most of us will note that the TV lights were not on, but the refrigeration was still on? Did you leave the water heater on?

## **THE METER MEASURES ENERGY USAGE**

- 9.** Remember that a short in the wiring will cause the meter to turn. There is no such thing as a "Creeping" meter. If it moves, something in the house is using electricity. Direct all of our attention away from the meter as the culprit. It is seldom the cause but often blamed. Less than 2 out of 1,000 meters are going to be wrong when tested. This includes running slow or running fast meters. Most old meters will likely run slow. If you ask Grayson Rural Electric to test the meter first and pay for it, the meter with no problem will leave you unsatisfied and still not knowledgeable about what causes your bill to show up as it does.

## **WHEN TO TEST A METER**

- 10.** Look for the culprit appliance in your home. After this exercise then you may call for a meter test. Meter tests are always most helpful done as a last resort instead of first. Your Grayson Rural Electric representative can explain more to you. There is a charge to have the meter tested.