



GUIDE TO PURCHASING RENEWABLE LOW-IMPACT ELECTRICITY IN NOVA SCOTIA

UNDERSTANDING YOUR ELECTRICITY OPTIONS

This Guide is for residential and small commercial customers.

As a Nova Scotia electricity consumer, you have a choice when buying electricity for your home or business. This Guide provides information to help you understand your electricity supply options and select the one that's right for you.

In Nova Scotia, if you are not a customer of a municipal electric utility:

- 1) You can purchase electricity from Nova Scotia Power, at a rate that is reviewed and approved by the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB);
- 2) You can purchase renewable, low-impact electricity from an independent licensed Electricity Retailer (also known as a Licensed Retail Supplier or LRS) under a contract. The rates charged by an Electricity Retailer are not approved by the NSUARB, with the exception of the Base and Distribution Charges.

Customers of municipal electric utilities (Antigonish Electric Utility, Berwick Electricity Commission, Canso Electric Light Commission, Lunenburg Electric Utility, Mahone Bay Electric Utility, Riverport Electric Light Commission) are not eligible to purchase renewable, low-impact electricity from an Electricity Retailer.

NOVA SCOTIA POWER SUPPLY

Nova Scotia Power generates electricity from a variety of sources, including fossil fuels and renewable sources such as wind and hydroelectric generating stations.

If your electricity is supplied by Nova Scotia Power, the bills you receive from Nova Scotia Power will include a Base Charge and an Energy Charge. The Base Charge is a fixed amount for each month, no matter how much electricity you use. The Energy Charge depends on the amount of electricity you use each month.



Base Charge

*The **Base Charge** is a fixed monthly charge that represents a portion of the cost for your home or business to be connected to the electricity distribution system. It does not change with the amount of electricity used. The Base Charge helps to pay for things such as the cost of your connection to the electricity system, meter reading, billing, and customer service.*

Energy Charge

*The **Energy Charge** is a charge that varies with the amount of electricity consumed. It helps pay for the cost of supplying, or generating, electricity including for fuel, as well as for the cost of delivering electricity, such as for the powerlines, substations, and other equipment necessary to operate the electricity system.*

For most users, the Energy Charge represents the largest component of their annual electricity bill.

ELECTRICITY RETAILER SUPPLY

Electricity Retailers are only allowed to sell renewable, low-impact electricity generated from within Nova Scotia. Renewable, low-impact electricity includes electricity generated from wind, wave, tide, run-of-the-river hydraulic, biomass (for example, wood and plant waste), solar, and landfill gas sources. These sources of electricity are considered by the Government of Nova Scotia to be renewable and low-impact, meaning they have a minimal negative impact on the environment.

If your electricity is supplied by an Electricity Retailer, the bill you receive will be from the Electricity Retailer, not Nova Scotia Power. The bill will have charges from the Electricity Retailer for the supply of renewable electricity. In addition to the charges for the supply of electricity, the bill will also have a Base Charge and a Distribution Charge. The Base Charge and the Distribution Charge are charges from Nova Scotia Power for the cost of being connected to the Nova Scotia Power electricity system and the services Nova Scotia Power continues to provide for you, and are approved by the NSUARB. The Electricity Retailer does not alter, change, mark-up, or make a profit on the Nova Scotia Power charges.



Retailer Charges

Retailer Charges may be shown on your bill as one charge or several different charges and they may have different names. These charges recover the cost of supply, or generating, renewable low-impact electricity, as well as the cost of transmitting the electricity over the Nova Scotia Power high-voltage transmission system. Retailer Charges also recover the costs incurred by the Electricity Retailer for billing, customer service, and other administrative activities.

Base Charge

The **Base Charge** is a fixed monthly charge that represents a portion of the cost for your home or business to be connected to the Nova Scotia Power electricity system. It does not change with the amount of electricity used. The Base Charge helps to pay for things such as the cost of your connection to the electricity system, meter reading, and billing. The Base Charge is set by the NSUARB and is the same as you would pay with Nova Scotia Power. The Electricity Retailer does not mark up or make a profit on this charge and pays the Base Charge to Nova Scotia Power.

Distribution Charge

The **Distribution Charge** is a charge that varies with the amount of electricity consumed. It helps pay for the cost of carrying electricity from the Nova Scotia Power high-voltage system to your home or business. It helps pay for things such as the powerlines, substations, and other equipment necessary to operate the electricity system. It also helps pay for the cost of repairs and emergency response to the electricity system. The Distribution Charge is set by the NSUARB. The Electricity Retailer does not mark up or make a profit on this charge and pays the Distribution Charge to Nova Scotia Power.



WHO DOES WHAT?

The Role of Electricity Retailers

Electricity Retailers are independent, private sector companies that offer to sell electricity under contracts, usually for terms of one to five years. The contracts are available to both residential and commercial customers.

Electricity Retailers must be licensed by the NSUARB before they can start offering electricity contracts for sale in Nova Scotia.

The Role of Nova Scotia Power

Nova Scotia Power is a regulated utility that supplies and delivers electricity and provides related utility services to the great majority of electricity customers. Nova Scotia Power's powerlines will carry the Electricity Retailer's electricity to the customer's location.

The Role of the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB)

The NSUARB is an independent body that regulates most utilities in Nova Scotia. It regulates the electricity rates of Nova Scotia Power, including the rates for the Base Charge and Distribution Charge that are included on the bills to Electricity Retailer customers.

The NSUARB licenses Electricity Retailers and oversees their marketing and sales activities. Electricity Retailers must follow a NSUARB-approved Code of Conduct. The NSUARB does not regulate the rates that Electricity Retailers charge for electricity.

WHAT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASING ELECTRICITY?

You can choose your electricity supplier and the rate option that's best for you.

1. Buying electricity from an Electricity Retailer

You may choose to sign a contract to buy your electricity from an independent Electricity Retailer at an agreed-upon rate or rates per kilowatt-hour (cents per kWh) for a specific number of years — from 1 to 5 years.

If you decide to purchase your electricity from an Electricity Retailer, there may be a brief interruption of your electricity service in order to install a new electricity meter. This will not apply if the customer already has an appropriate meter. Nova Scotia Power will carry electricity from the Electricity Retailer's generating facility to your location through the same powerlines it currently uses. Nova Scotia Power will provide emergency repair service to their system, the same as they do now. What changes is that your electricity will be generated from renewable, low-impact generating sources. The Electricity Retailer will send you an electricity bill each month for your total cost, including Nova Scotia



Power's charges. Your bill will separately list the Electricity Retailer's charges for electricity and Nova Scotia Power's charges for the Base Charge and Distribution Charge. Your Electricity Retailer may or may not offer an Equal Billing Plan.

2. Buying electricity from Nova Scotia Power

You may also choose to buy your electricity from Nova Scotia Power. The rates that Nova Scotia Power charges for electricity are regulated by the NSUARB. You do not have to sign a contract to receive service from Nova Scotia Power.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHICH OPTION IS BEST FOR YOU?

The best option for you will be the one that suits your own particular needs. Each option has benefits. To choose among options, you will need to consider the rates and the period that the rate will remain in effect, the contract's terms and conditions, how much electricity you will use, electricity market conditions, and the impact that you want to make on the environment.

By signing a contract, you are agreeing to buy renewable, low-impact electricity at a contract rate for one to five years. The rate may be fixed for the entire duration of the contract. The amount you pay over that period could be more or less than what you would have been charged by Nova Scotia Power under the regulated rate over the same period.

WITH AN ELECTRICITY CONTRACT, YOUR ELECTRICITY RATE MAY BE FIXED FOR A CERTAIN PERIOD OF TIME BUT THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT YOU WILL SAVE MONEY.

SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE SIGNING AN ELECTRICITY CONTRACT

Before signing or agreeing to a contract, you will be given a Disclosure Statement, a Rate Comparison, and this Guide. The Disclosure Statement explains your rights as a consumer and highlights some of the information in this Guide. The Rate Comparison shows you the current Nova Scotia Power rate and the rate being offered by the Electricity Retailer.

- How do the contract rate and the Nova Scotia Power rate compare? Take the time to review and compare the contract rate and the current rate charged by Nova Scotia Power. Remember that the Nova Scotia Power Distribution Charge is in addition to the contract rate. The Base Charge is the same for both Nova Scotia Power supply and Electricity Retailer supply.
- How long do you want to be locked-in at the contract rate?



- What happens if you move? If you move, your contract will automatically terminate. You cannot take your contract to your new address, but you can enter into a new contract.
- What happens if you want to cancel your contract? Your contract explains how you may cancel and whether there are any costs to cancel the contract. At a minimum, you have 30 days from the date of the first bill under your contract from your Electricity Retailer to cancel with no charge, provided you pay the charges on the first bill.

If you sign or agree to a contract, you will also need to complete the Transaction Request Application, which will be provided by the Electricity Retailer. Nova Scotia Power requires this form to process your switch to an Electricity Retailer.

WHEN CAN YOU CHANGE YOUR ELECTRICITY RATE OR RETAILER?

If you are currently supplied by Nova Scotia Power, you can sign a contract with an Electricity Retailer at any time. If you sign a contract with an Electricity Retailer, your Electricity Retailer will notify Nova Scotia Power and your new contract will take effect at the first available opportunity, which could be 30 to 60 or more days later.

If you have already agreed to a contract with another Electricity Retailer, the terms and conditions of the contract will determine – and may limit – when you can change to another Electricity Retailer or Nova Scotia Power. If you have questions about your contract, call your Electricity Retailer at the phone number listed on your monthly electricity bill.

HOW CAN YOU FIND AN ELECTRICITY RETAILER?

Electricity Retailers may advertise, send an agent to your door, mail information directly to you, have a website, or contact you by phone. While neither the NSUARB nor Nova Scotia Power can recommend an Electricity Retailer to you, the NSUARB maintains a current list of all Electricity Retailers who are licensed by the NSUARB. You can get a copy of this list by contacting the NSUARB at (902) 424-4448, or by visiting the NSUARB website at <https://nsuarb.novascotia.ca>. You may be able to find some Electricity Retailers listed in the Yellow Pages or through internet searches.

HOW CAN AN ELECTRICITY RETAILER CONTACT YOU?

The NSUARB has approved the following marketing channels.

a) Door-to-door Sales

Electricity Retailers may visit your home or business to offer to sell you an electricity contract.



b) Telephone Marketing:

Electricity Retailers may engage in telemarketing and are required to follow the protocols set by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, as well as any other requirements set by the NSUARB. Telephone sales and related communications must be made with the person(s) named on the Nova Scotia Power bill, and be recorded and retained by the Electricity Retailer. If you decide that you want to buy your electricity from an Electricity Retailer as a result of telemarketing, you can complete the contract over the telephone. Your verbal agreement is the same as a written signature. The Electricity Retailer will send you a copy of the Rate Comparison, Disclosure Statement, and contract by mail or email within 14 days.

c) Electronic (Internet) Sales

You can agree to a contact with an Electricity Retailer through their website or other electronic portal, or request contract documents that you sign and return to the Electricity Retailer. Electronic sales must be made with the person(s) named on the Nova Scotia Power bill.

d) Direct Mailings

Contracts initiated by a mailing of documents to you by an Electricity Retailer will require the signature of the person(s) named on the Nova Scotia Power bill.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU SIGN AN ELECTRICITY CONTRACT?

Between 10 and 21 days after you agree to a contract, the Electricity Retailer will contact you by telephone to verify that you want to proceed with the contract. If you want to proceed, the Electricity Retailer will process the contract that you agreed to. You do not have to proceed with the contract, even if you have previously signed or agreed to it.

To be supplied by an Electricity Retailer, Nova Scotia Power must install a special type of electricity meter, called an interval meter, at the customer's location. This meter measures the amount of electricity you use throughout the day. This metering information is needed by Nova Scotia Power and the Electricity Retailer, but it does not affect the rate that you pay, which is the same rate no matter the time of day. The customer may be responsible for paying for the new meter.

Following the installation of the interval meter, Nova Scotia Power will read your electricity meter. Once this reading has been taken, Nova Scotia Power will transfer your electricity supply to you Electricity Retailer. You will receive a final bill from Nova Scotia Power. Your next bills will come from the Electricity Retailer for the duration of your contract. Nova Scotia Power will continue to read your meter and provide emergency repairs to their connection to your property.



WHAT IF YOU WANT TO CANCEL AN ELECTRICITY CONTRACT?

You can cancel your electricity contract without a penalty or cancellation fee if you are a residential or other small commercial customer¹ during the penalty-free period. This period runs from the day you agree to the contract until 30 days after the date of the first bill from your Electricity Retailer.

If you want to cancel your contract without paying a penalty or cancellation fee, you must contact your Electricity Retailer before the end of the penalty-free period.

If you decide to cancel your contract after the penalty-free period, you may have to pay a cancellation fee. The maximum cancellation fee that an Electricity Retailer can charge a residential or small commercial customer will be stated in your contract.

If you sell or permanently move from the premises to which electricity is being supplied under an electricity contract, the contract will automatically be cancelled. You will not be subject to cancellation fees, penalties, or charges from your Electricity Retailer as a result.

AS A CONSUMER, HOW ARE YOU PROTECTED?

Your best protection is to be informed. Consumers are protected by the NSUARB's Regulations and Code of Conduct, which apply to all Electricity Retailers operating in Nova Scotia. The Code of Conduct defines acceptable marketing practices. The Regulations state requirements for contracts and provide for a process to resolve disputes that may arise between consumers and Electricity Retailers.

Ask your Electricity Retailer for a copy the Code of Conduct. You can also view the Code of Conduct and the NSUARB Regulations online at <https://nsuarb.novascotia.ca>.

If you have concerns about your electricity supply arrangements provided by an Electricity Retailer, you should contact your Electricity Retailer directly. If your concerns are not addressed to your satisfaction, a dispute resolution process through the NSUARB can provide a resolution to your problem.

HOW DO YOU GET MORE INFORMATION?

For information about current pricing, features, and options, contact an Electricity Retailer directly. If you have questions about your electricity supply arrangements or the service being provided, you can contact your Electricity Retailer. Their contact information is shown on your electricity bill.

For information on Nova Scotia Power rates, contact Nova Scotia Power or visit www.nspower.ca.

¹ Residential customers take service under Nova Scotia Power's Domestic Service Tariff. Small Commercial customers take service under Nova Scotia Power's Small General Tariff.