
Date Submitted: September 06, 2019

Proceeding name: BC Hydro CCF Pilot – Year One Evaluation Report

Are you currently registered as an intervener or interested party: No

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Comment:

My interest in the proceeding is that I believe the BC Hydro CCF should be eliminated completely, not merely reduced from 25 to 13 cents per month. The CCF is an extorted fee from customers to subsidize what is literally a welfare fund for non-paying BC Hydro customers. I fall in the low income range and it is very possible I will need to utilize this fund sometime in the far future; however, I still feel it is wrong and unacceptable for BC Hydro to forcefully demand customers donate to a utility company's charity for any reason--even if it might benefit me. There are modes of government and other financial assistance available to people who need it, particularly in this manic "Go Fund Me" age. For BC Hydro to set up a system that will absolutely enable people to scam that fund is utterly naive and irresponsible. Additionally; within the BC Hydro customer service agreement, it indicates the customer is obligated to pay for the electricity used and the specific listed taxes. The crisis fund does NOT fall under the service agreement rules and even though it was voted on, just like the HST, I believe it is also not a legal charge and simply cannot be enforced by any party. There is nothing in BC Hydro's agreement that mandates customers pay for abstract charges, and so we should not without penalty. At the very least, any BC Hydro customer prior to the CCF implementation and who already falls under this BC Hydro Agreement (attached and copied from BC Hydro's website September 26, 2018) should be allowed to opt out of the CCF and permanently grandfathered under the original customer service agreement, regardless of any future address change. If BC Hydro wants to provide an updated service agreement that includes the CCF that would affect new customers only, then they can go ahead and extort donations from only those customers. Better yet, eliminate this contentious and obligating BC Hydro CCF.

Customer service rules for our customers

We do our best to make it easy for you to do business with us. Here are some key things we think you should know as a BC Hydro customer.

Disclaimer

We serve our customers in accordance with the Electric Tariff, which includes the Terms and Conditions and Rate Schedules. Our intent is to provide you with important information to help you manage your account and service.

This document does not contain the full scope of your rights and responsibilities, and in any case where there may be conflicting information with the Electric Tariff, the [Electric Tariff](#) shall prevail.

For a full description of the conditions of your service with BC Hydro, please refer to the [Electric Tariff](#).

When you set up or move your account

To avoid a disruption in electricity service, **set up an account before you move into your property**. We disconnect electricity when no one applies for service at a property after the previous account holder moves out.

You can only set up accounts in your own name (or the complete legal name of your business for opening a business account), and you'll need to provide us with proper identification and reference documentation.

[Learn more about opening a new account](#) or requesting a new electrical connection to be installed on your property.

You're responsible for paying for the electricity used at any property that's in your possession.

This applies even if a service agreement hasn't been signed or you aren't the one using the electricity at the property. Some examples when this might occur include:

- You move into a home but don't open an account until after you've been living there for several days. In this case, you'd still be responsible for paying for the electricity used at the property since you moved in.
- You own or manage a rental property that's vacant, but some electricity is still being used (e.g. for heating or refrigeration systems). In this case, you would be responsible for paying for the electricity used.

If you have an outstanding balance from a previously closed account, the amount due will be transferred to your new account.

Please note that you need to be at least 19 years old to open an account with BC Hydro in your name.

Electricity rates

The rate we'll use for your account is based on how you use electricity. Property type, intended use of electricity at your property, and how much you use are factors that may be used to determine your rate.

- If you live in a residence and use electricity strictly for residential purposes, you will be put on the residential rate.
- If you live in a residence and have a home-based business, you may be put on a business rate.

[Learn more about our rates.](#)

When you contact us to set up an account, you'll need to tell us how you'll be using electricity at your property so we can select the most appropriate rate for your account. Understanding your rate can help you better manage your electricity costs and avoid unnecessary charges.

Change in electricity use

If there are changes at your property, your electricity rate may need to change too. To confirm that your rate is still appropriate, contact us when changes such as the following occur:

- You start or complete a construction project or major renovation
- You change the function or zoning of your property, such as residential farm use
- You start a home-based business
- You change the size of your business operation

We'll only change your rate once you notify us. We're not able to adjust your charges for changes prior to your notification, so give us a call as soon as possible about a change.

Standard charges

Some standard charges may apply to your account:

STANDARD CHARGES	AMOUNT
Account charge	\$12.40
Returned payment charge	\$6.00
Reconnection charge (minimum)	\$30.00
Meter test charge for meters sent to Measurement Canada for testing and found to be accurate	\$181.00
Failed (meter) installation charge	\$65.00
Service connection call-back charge (Zone 1)	\$368.00

Transformer rental charge	17% per year of the replacement value (billed monthly)
Net metering site acceptance verification fee (generators above 5 kW)	BC Hydro's actual cost to a maximum of \$600.00
Late payment charge	\$1.5% per month (equivalent 19.6% per annum compounded monthly)

Meter choices program

RADIO-OFF METER	
Set-up charge (from existing legacy meter)	\$22.60
Set-up charge (from existing smart meter)	\$77.60
Meter removal charge	\$55.00
Monthly fee	\$20.00 per month
LEGACY METER	
Monthly fee	\$32.40 per month

Taxes and your bill

There are some taxes and levies on your BC Hydro bill:

5% Goods and Services Tax (GST)

GST on electricity charges is payable by all customers with the exception of certain First Nations customers.

3.5% Provincial Sales Tax (PST)

A PST exemption is automatically available for residential customers who use electricity solely for residential purposes in a residential dwelling.

PST is generally payable by business customers (other than farmers) who use electricity for commercial purposes.

- Customers who are farmers may qualify for a PST exemption on electricity use solely for farm or residential purposes.
- Business customers that operate a nursing home or a residential multi-care facility may qualify for a PST exemption.

Contact us to review your account and determine whether you're eligible for a PST exemption on your account.

If your account is eligible for any other tax exemptions, you'll need to let us know when you set up your account or if there's a change. We may ask for verification of your information.

Regional transit levy

The regional transit levy is established through the Power Levy Bylaw and applied to all residential accounts in TransLink's service region in the Metro Vancouver area. [Learn more about the Power Levy Bylaw.](#)

First Nations customers

To ensure the correct taxes are being charged, please give us a call at 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376) to review your account.

[Do you own a business that's operated in your home?](#)

Security deposits

Security deposits are one way to limit the losses and costs that are incurred when customers don't pay their bills.

As a new customer or a customer who has not maintained a good payment history, you may be charged a security deposit.

There are a few alternatives that may allow you to waive the security deposit requirement:

Credit bureau report – give us permission to obtain a credit bureau report to verify creditworthiness. We may waive your security deposit if your credit report shows a good credit history.

Reference letter – provide a copy of a credit reference letter from another utility, such as one from another province to verify creditworthiness.

Account guarantee – if you're a residential customer, you can have another BC Hydro customer guarantee the account. The guarantor will pay the amount up to the security deposit amount in the event there is an outstanding balance after the account is terminated. Submit the BC Hydro [account guarantee form](#) [PDF 58 KB].

Pay As You Go plan – if you're a residential customer, you can choose a Pay As You Go plan. Billing is based on fixed monthly installments plus an initial payment (in advance). This initial payment is calculated based on the average cost of electricity usage at your location for the previous 12 months.

Customers who have their bills paid directly by the Province of BC Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation (MSDSI) are not required to provide a security deposit.

We calculate the deposit amount based on historical electricity usage at the property and how often you receive a bill.

BILL FREQUENCY	SECURITY DEPOSIT
Bi-monthly	Security deposit amount is up to three times (3X) the estimated average monthly amount based on actual electricity usage
Monthly	Security deposit amount is up to two times (2X) the estimated average monthly bill based on actual electricity usage

You'll receive interest for your security deposit, credited to your account on each bill. Interest income is reportable on your tax return to the Canada Revenue Agency. We'll send you a T5 at the end of February if the interest credited to your account is more than \$50.

The security deposit may be returned to you after 12 months of good payment history.

Paying your bill

Payment for the full amount of your bill is required within 21 days of the billing date. An outstanding balance after the due date may be subject to Late Payment Charges. This applies even if the amount owing is based on an estimated meter reading, for non-energy charges or for security deposits.

[Learn more about ways to pay your bill.](#)

Equal payment plan

You can choose to set up an equal payment plan, so that you make equal payments each month throughout the year. Some customers find this can help their budgeting.

How it works

- The installment amount that you pay each month is calculated based on the previous 12 months of total electricity use divided by 12.
- We'll review the installment amount every four months to make sure the amount is comparable to electricity use and adjust the amount if necessary.
- In month 12, also known as the equal payment plan anniversary date, you'll be billed for your regular installment amount. In addition, we compare the amount you were billed in the last 11 months with your actual electricity use for the year.
 - If you've used less electricity than what you were billed for, you'll receive a credit for the difference.

- If you've used more electricity than what you were billed for, you'll be billed for the difference.
- Each month your bill will include your electricity billed to date, your total installments billed, and your anniversary date so you can keep track.

Can't pay your bill right now?

If you're unable to pay your bill in full by the due date or can only make a partial payment, we have two options that may help you.

DEFER A PAYMENT	SET UP A PAYMENT
<p>If you're a residential customer, log in to your MyHydro account or call us at 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376) to request a one-time due date extension.</p> <p>Your account is still subject to late payment charges even if you defer a payment.</p>	<p>Call us at 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376) to discuss setting up a payment plan to pay your balance owing in installments.</p> <p>If you set up an installment payment plan, your account won't be subject to late payment charges.</p> <p>If you miss a payment on your installment plan, your full amount owing is due immediately, and late payment charges will be applied from the original bill due date.</p>

To be eligible for a payment arrangement, your account needs to be in good standing and you need to have met any past payment arrangements that you made with us.

Contact us right away if you won't be able to pay your bill by the due date. If your account remains past due and you don't contact us, you may be subject to collection action, which can include disconnecting your service.

Late payments and disconnections

Late payment charges

The full amount owing on your bill is due 21 days after the billing date.

If your unpaid balance is over \$30, a late payment charge of 1.5% per month (19.56% per year) of your entire outstanding balance will be added to your account. To allow for payment processing time, the late payment charge isn't assessed until 30 days after the bill date.

When customers don't pay their bills on time, we incur additional costs for items like payment notifications, carrying costs for delayed revenue and collection action. Late payment charges help us recover some of these costs.

Disconnections for non-payment

You are responsible for keeping your account up to date. If the bill isn't paid in full by the due date, your account payment will become overdue and it may be subject to late payment charges and disconnection.

If your account falls behind, we'll contact you in writing or by telephone to remind you to pay your amount owing. If payment in full for the outstanding balance is not paid and your account continues to be delinquent, a final notice of disconnection will be sent. Disconnections can occur any time after we have notified you with a final notice of disconnection. If the outstanding balance continues to remain unpaid, we may refer your account to a collection agency.

Disconnections of accounts occur only when the outstanding balance is \$70 or more.

[Learn about our winter disconnection policies.](#)

If you've received a final notice of disconnection and have made the payment in full, it's important that you report your payment to avoid any disruption of service that can occur while the payment is being processed. You can report your payment by [logging in to your MyHydro account](#) or calling us at 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376).

Customers with medical conditions

If you have a medical condition requiring medical equipment powered by electricity for life support purposes, you'll be given a 20-day extension before your account is disconnected for non-payment. Before we grant the 20-day extension, you need to contact us to request it and discuss setting up a payment arrangement. We may require verification of your medical condition.

How to get your electricity back on if you're disconnected

If your account is disconnected, payment in full for the outstanding balance will have to be paid before you can request a reconnection. A reconnection charge of \$30 will be charged on your next bill and we may request a security deposit.

If you have a smart meter, you may be able to request a reconnection without speaking to an agent. Once you've paid the total amount owing, [log in to your MyHydro account](#) or call us at 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376) to report your payment.

If your account requires a manual reconnection and you are requesting the reconnection be done after business hours or on a weekend, an Overtime Reconnection Charge of \$280 will apply.

Disconnections for other reasons

Vacant locations

We disconnect electricity when no one applies for service at a property after the previous account holder closes their account.

We'll reconnect service to a property once we receive an application for service from the new occupant. To avoid a disruption in electricity service, you should apply for an account before your move-in date.

If you're a business owner, property manager or landlord with tenants that pay BC Hydro directly for electricity service, you should apply for a [Rental Premise Agreement](#). This ensures electricity remains on between tenants.

Access to our meters and equipment

We require safe and unobstructed access to our meters and equipment to maintain your service. Ensure the meter and any other equipment is not blocked by plants or trees, fences, landscaping, and that we have access to any locked doors or gates.

If we cannot get access or if access is blocked, we will attempt to contact you. If we cannot arrange access, we will have no choice but to disconnect electricity service.

If a disconnection is required, it will be done at the point of connection (such as at the pole or underground connection point), which has a much higher cost than a remote or manual disconnection at your meter. When you request a reconnection, a Refused Access reconnection charge of \$700 will be charged to recover our costs.

Construction and renovations

Electricity is dangerous, so if a temporary disconnection is required to safely work on your construction or renovation project, let us know. [Learn more about electrical connections](#).

Closing your account

If you're moving and no longer require electricity service, we need at least 24 hours' notice to close your account.

You are responsible for the payment of any amounts associated with your account up until this notice expires. This includes any electricity used in the 24 hours from when you contact us as well as any costs related to damaged or lost wires, meter(s) or other types of our equipment.

Re-applying for service at the same location within 12 months

If you cancel your service, there is no new account opened (e.g. by someone else) and you apply for service again at the same service address within a 12 month period, you are responsible for the daily basic charge for all the days in between and the costs to restore your service. A reconnection or new connection charge will also be added to the account.

A common example of this occurring is when a customer cancels service during a renovation project and then reapplies for service. For construction and renovations requiring a temporary or permanent disconnection of service, [click here](#).

Property managers and landlords

Meter reading

Most of our meters send your electricity use information back to us automatically, three times a day.

A small number of standard meters are still being read manually. In addition, customers who have opted-in to the [Meter Choices Program](#) (radio-off and legacy meters) also have the meters read manually every two months.

Please ensure we have safe and unobstructed access to our meters and equipment.

Estimated meter reads

If we're unable to read your meter, an estimate may be used for billing. A message – "your bill shows an estimate" will appear on the bill. Once we're able to read your meter, an adjustment will be made on your account to reflect the actual electricity use.

[Learn more about electricity meters.](#)

Equipment on your property

The owner of a property is responsible for providing proper wiring and fittings that meet the electrical code or municipal bylaws so that we can provide electricity service.

The owner of the property is responsible for providing and maintaining the following:

- Through-bolted clevis with insulator
- Weather head (also known as gooseneck)
- Conduit (also known as house pipe, service mast)
- Meter base
- All wiring inside your property

We own and are responsible for the following electrical equipment:

- Electricity meters
- Power poles belonging to BC Hydro
- Wires
- Cables

Safe and unobstructed access to our meters and equipment is required for us to maintain your service.

All equipment belonging to us remains property of BC Hydro even if it's on your property, and can't be moved or removed without our written permission.

Electricity can be extremely dangerous. To ensure your safety and the safety of the public and our employees, please don't attempt to work on our equipment. This includes the removal of trees or objects that have fallen or are growing near wires or poles. Connections and disconnections from our system must only be made by our crews and contractors. Contact us if work needs to be done on or near the equipment serving your property.

[Learn more about electrical connections.](#)

Our liability and right to disconnect or temporarily suspend your service

We work hard to provide you with regular and uninterrupted service but we don't guarantee a constant supply of electricity, or the maintenance of frequency or voltage. Because of this, we can't be held responsible, or liable for any loss, injury, damage or expense, including loss of profit, loss of revenues or other economic loss, caused by an interruption or defect in the supply of electricity.

We may suspend or terminate your service at any time to prevent theft or fraud, protect our property or to protect our service to other customers. We may also disconnect you if you fail to comply with the terms of our service agreement, or if we're ordered by a government authority to suspend or terminate your service.

Electrical service may be temporarily suspended for safety reasons, to make repairs or improvements to our system, or in the event of fire, flood or other emergency. Whenever practical we'll provide notice of such suspension and will restore service as soon as possible.

Complaints

If you have any dispute about the service we're providing you, please [contact us](#) so that we can make every effort to resolve your complaint.

We are regulated by the [British Columbia Utilities Commission \(BCUC\)](#) and under the Utilities Commission Act the BCUC's responsibilities include ensuring that customers receive safe, reliable and non-discriminatory energy services at fair rates from the utilities it regulates. If we have not resolved your complaint to your satisfaction, you have the right to [submit a complaint to the BCUC](#).

The [Office of the Ombudsperson](#) is an independent office that investigates whether provincial public authorities, including BC Hydro, are acting fairly and reasonably. If you believe we've treated you in an unfair manner, you have the option of [submitting a complaint](#).