**Customer Choice**

**Q/As for Distributors’ Call Centres and Websites**

**Questions and Answers**

**What is Customer Choice?**

If you’re a residential or small business customer, you can choose to switch between Time-of-Use (TOU) and Tiered prices. And beginning (ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR TO INSERT DATE HERE WHEN READY), you can switch to the new Ultra-Low Overnight (ULO) price plan.

To switch price plans, you must notify (INSERT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR NAME HERE) by completing an election form. You can ask to switch price plans at any time.

If you want to stay with your current price plan, no action is required.

**What are TOU prices?**

With TOU prices, the price depends on when you use electricity.

There are three TOU price periods:

* **Off-peak,** when demand for electricity is generally lower. This price applies in the evenings on weekdays and all day on weekends. Every household and small business is different, but on average, Ontario households use nearly two thirds of their electricity during off-peak hours.
* **Mid-peak,** when demand for electricity is moderate. These periods are during the daytime, but not the busiest times of day.
* **On-peak,** when demand for electricity is generally higher. These are the busier times of day – generally when people are cooking, starting up their personal electronics and running heaters or air conditioners.

With TOU pricing, you can help manage your electricity costs by shifting your usage to lower price periods when possible.

**What are Tiered prices?**

With Tiered prices, you can use a certain amount of electricity each month at a lower price. Once that limit (called a threshold) is exceeded, a higher price applies. In the winter period (November 1 – April 30), the Tier threshold for residential customers is 1,000 kWh. In the summer period (May 1 – October 31), the Tier threshold for residential customers is 600 kWh. The Tier threshold for small business customers is 750 kWh all year round.

Tiered prices give you the flexibility to use electricity at any time of day at the same price, although that price will change if you exceed the threshold during the month.

**What are ULO prices?**

With ULO prices, the price depends on when you use electricity.

There are four ULO price periods:

* **Ultra-Low Overnight**, when demand for electricity is lowest on average.
* **Weekend Off-peak**, when demand for electricity is generally lower.
* **Mid-peak**, when demand for electricity is moderate.
* **On-peak**, when demand for electricity is highest on average.

The ULO price periods are the same in the summer as they are in the winter.

**What do TOU, Tiered and ULO prices pay for?**

The OEB sets TOU, Tiered and ULO prices based on a forecast of how much it will cost to supply TOU, Tiered and ULO customers with the electricity they are expected to use over the next 12 months, and to recover the same forecast average cost of supply.

The OEB sets TOU, Tiered and ULO prices under the Regulated Price Plan. The Regulated Price Plan is designed to provide stable pricing, encourage conservation and ensure that the price customers pay for electricity better reflects the price paid to generators that produce the electricity that customers use in their homes or small businesses.

Electricity distributors are not allowed to make a profit from the sale of electricity.

**How often are Regulated Price Plan prices (TOU, Tiered and ULO) set?**

The OEB typically sets TOU, Tiered and ULO prices once a year, for November 1, based on an estimate of how much it will cost to supply residential and small business customers on the Regulated Price Plan with the electricity that they are expected to use. The first ULO prices were set for May 1, 2023, and will be reset for November 1, 2023.

**Will I save money by switching price plans?**

There is no guarantee you will save money if you switch price plans. The total bill impact of switching will vary depending on how much electricity you consume in a month and when it is consumed during the day.

Considering switching price plans? For more information, go to [www.oeb.ca/choice](http://www.oeb.ca/choice) and use the OEB’s bill calculator to estimate what your bill might look like if you switched price plans.

**What do I need to do to switch price plans?**

If you don’t want to switch price plans, you don’t need to do anything. You will stay on your current price plan.

If you do want to switch price plans, here are the rules that apply. These rules also apply if you later want to switch back or to another price plan.

* (INSERT NAME OF ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR) must make its election form available on its website, and to any customer that requests it. (INSERT NAME OF ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR) must accept election forms by email or mail at a minimum. (ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR TO INSERT DETAILS ON OTHER WAYS THE FORM WILL BE ACCEPTED). You’ll need to fill out the election form to notify (INSERT NAME OF ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR) that you want to switch. The form is intended to be as simple as possible in terms of the information that you need to provide. You should have a recent electricity bill on hand when filling out the form, as you will need your utility account number.
* Within 10 business days of receiving your election form, (INSERT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR NAME HERE) must tell you if your election form can’t be processed and must explain why (for instance, if you’re not authorized to make changes to the account, or the account can’t be verified).
* If there are no issues with your election form, (INSERT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR NAME HERE) has the same 10 business days to let you know when you can expect to start being billed on your new price plan.
* A switch in price plans can only take effect at the start of a billing period. A billing period is generally about 30 days long, but that can vary. The start and end dates are identified on your electricity bill. Many customers are not billed based on a calendar month, and the start of your billing period can be any given day of a month.
  + (INSERT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR NAME HERE) must start charging you on your new price plan as of your next billing period after you submit your election form if (INSERT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR NAME HERE) receives that form *at least 10 business days* before that billing period starts, and provided there are no issues with your form (see above).
  + If (INSERT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR NAME HERE) receives your complete election form *less than 10 business days* before the start of your next billing period, (INSERT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR NAME HERE) might still be able to switch you for your next billing period. But if (INSERT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR NAME HERE) can’t do so, (INSERT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTOR NAME HERE) has to start charging you on your new price plan at the start of the next billing period after that.
  + Because a switch in prices can only take effect at the beginning of a billing period, it could take some time between the day you provide your election form and the day you actually start getting charged on your new price plan.

**If I have switched to a new price plan, can I switch back to my previous price plan or another price plan?**

Yes.

**Can all customers switch price plans?**

The choice between TOU, Tiered and ULO prices is available to residential and small business customers that have smart meters and are billed under the OEB’s Regulated Price Plan.

Some residential and small business customers are charged Tiered prices because their meters can’t be used to bill TOU or ULO prices. They can’t switch to TOU or ULO prices at this time.

If you live in a condo or apartment that has its own individual meter and your bill comes from a company other than your electricity utility, you are a customer of a unit sub-meter provider (USMP). Customers of USMPs also can’t switch price plans. That decision can only be made for the building as a whole by the person that retained a USMP for the property. In most cases, the property manager, landlord or condominium board sets up this arrangement.

**I receive a monthly credit from the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP). Will I lose that credit if I switch price plans?**

No. You will still receive the credit.

**I receive the Ontario Electricity Rebate. Will I lose that rebate if I switch price plans?**

No. You will still receive the rebate.