

**RESOURCE**

Rate Plans, Load Timing, and Demand Charges

Two households with identical total electricity usage can pay very different bills if one is on a flat rate and the other on time-of-use or demand-charge pricing. Understanding which structure you are on, and how your usage pattern interacts with it, changes which home-energy purchases actually save you money.

Time-of-use versus flat rate, directly compared

The [time-of-use versus flat rate engine](#) runs your usage pattern against both structures to show which one actually costs less for you specifically, rather than assuming time-of-use is automatically better or worse.

Demand charges are a different mechanism entirely

A demand charge bills your single highest power draw during a period, not your total energy used. The [demand charge bill impact engine](#) shows how much of your bill that peak-driven charge represents, which is often invisible until you look for it specifically.

Reducing a demand charge with a battery or load shifting

Since a demand charge is driven by your single highest moment, not your total usage, flattening that peak, through a battery discharging during it or simply avoiding running several large appliances simultaneously, can meaningfully reduce this specific charge. The [demand charge reduction value engine](#) quantifies that specific savings.

Shifting load to capture a rate spread

On a time-of-use plan, moving flexible loads, like EV charging or a pool pump, to off-peak hours captures the rate spread directly. The [rate plan shift value engine](#) estimates what that shifting is worth given your specific peak and off-peak rates.

EV charging adds a specific demand-charge risk

A Level 2 charger draws enough power to meaningfully raise your peak demand if it runs at the same time as other large loads. The [EV demand charge risk engine](#) flags this specifically for EV owners on a demand-charge rate plan, a risk that is easy to miss since it depends on your rate structure, not your vehicle.

Reading your own rate schedule

Your utility's rate schedule document, not the summary bill, is the authoritative source for whether you are on a demand-charge or time-of-use structure and what the specific rates and peak windows are. See the [reading a utility bill](#) resource for how to locate that detail.