

POWER PAGES

THE PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION OF TEXAS



UNDERSTANDING ELECTRIC COMPETITION

Historically, Texans received all aspects of their electric service from a utility assigned to them. With electric competition, residents of most parts of the state can choose the company that provides electricity to their home.

If you are in a competitive area, Retail Electric Providers (REPs) compete for your business, frequently offering lower prices, renewable energy options, or other incentives.

Basic Retail Electric Provider Information

All Retail Electric Providers (REPs) are required to provide basic information to you before switching your service. This information includes:

- the name of the new REP
- a statement about the REP's ability to provide information in English, Spanish or other languages used in marketing
- total price in kilo-watt-hours
- length of contract
- listing of any early termination fees
- deposit information
- the statement that you have the right to review and cancel the contract within three business days

WHY COMPETITION?

Electric competition allows residential consumers to have more control over their purchase of electric service. Competition for electric service has lowered rates and encouraged the development of new products and services.



THE SWITCHING PROCESS

Once you have decided which company and offer is right for you, switching is simple. Just contact the Retail Electric Provider you've chosen and tell them you'd like to switch, or sign up on their website. They'll send you a "Terms of Service" agreement, which is your new service contract. Review it carefully because after you receive it you'll only have three federal business days to cancel without penalty, if your Terms of Service provides for a penalty. Your new electric service plan will take effect within seven business days from the time you select a new provider. Switching providers will not interrupt your electric service. All that changes is the company that sells you power, not the company that maintains the poles and wires that deliver electricity to your home or business. The reliability of your service will not be affected by your choice of provider, and, if a power outage occurs for any reason, your service will still be restored just as before regardless of which company you're with.

THE COMPETITIVE ELECTRICITY MARKET

In the past, one company provided all parts of your electricity service (generation, transmission and distribution, and retail sales). With competition, these parts are separated into different companies.

Under competition, your local "wires company" delivers electricity over poles and wires, which they maintain. Retail Electric Providers (REPs) only sell electricity and provide customer service, and they compete against other providers for your business. Competing REPs may offer lower rates or other products and services. Before enrolling you as a new customer, REPs must follow proper authorization, verification, and marketing rules established by the Public Utility Commission (PUC). The PUC has created these rules and regulations to protect your rights as an electric customer.



Texas **Electric Choice**
EDUCATION PROGRAM

PowerToChoose.org
1-866-797-4839

ESTABLISHING NEW SERVICE

When planning a move, here are the steps you should take to set up service at your new residence:

- Contact the Retail Electric Provider of your choice at least seven working days before the date you wish to begin service. If you need a list of REPs in your area, visit www.powertochoose.org
- Review the Retail Electric Providers you are interested in and ask each one for a copy of its Electricity Facts Label to help you compare offers in a standardized format.
- If you are moving to a location that has never had electric service, contact the Retail Electric Provider of your choice, giving as much notice as possible to order new service.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Retail Electric Providers

- Check your retail electric provider's Web site or call their customer service number for additional information on energy conservation and saving on your electric bill. Visit the [Power to Choose](#) Web site to learn more about [Retail Electric Providers](#) and your options.



Texas Energy Efficiency

- The investor-owned utilities of Texas are required to meet energy efficiency levels. Service providers receive incentives from the utilities which lead to savings on energy efficiency improvements for their customers. [Texas Energy Efficiency](#) provides links to information about these programs.

Energy Star

- This program requires that a product meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the [US Environmental Protection Agency](#) and the [US Department of Energy](#).
- Visit the [Energy Star](#) Web site for information regarding utility savings associated with Energy Star appliances and complete the [Home Energy Analysis](#) for individualized information concerning your household energy consumption.

Other Helpful Links

- [Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy](#) Tips on Saving Energy and Money at Home
- [Federal Trade Commission](#) Cooling Your Home & Keeping Costs Low
- [EPA's Home Energy Saver](#) Online Energy Audit Tool

