

TORONTO STAR

Electricity prices going up 3.8%

Ontario householders will pay more than 10 cents a kilowatt hour for the energy portion of their electricity bill at peak periods under new prices announced Tuesday by the Ontario Energy Board.

The new prices come into effect May 1. They apply to households that do not have fixed price contracts with energy retailers.

The board's new prices, which are adjusted twice a year, will boost the overall power bill for a household using 800 kilowatt hours of power a month by \$3.96, or 3.8 per cent, the board says.

The energy charge is only part of the bill. Delivery, debt service and residual charges make up about half the total charge.

For households on time-of-use rates – which now make up the majority in the province – energy rates at each of the three daily pricing periods will climb by 0.8 cents a kilowatt hour. That will put the peak rate at 10.7 cents a kilowatt hour, the mid-peak rate at 8.9 cents a kilowatt hour and the off-peak rate at 5.9 cents a kilowatt hour.

But the peak rate period will end two hours earlier, at 7 p.m. instead of 9 p.m. starting May 1. That gives residents an extra two hours of power use at less than the peak rate in the period leading up to the next provincial election in October.

And the Liberal government, which started giving householders a 10 per cent discount on their power bills as of Jan. 1, argues that consumers will actually be paying about the same in May as they were year ago, when the discount is factored in.

For customers who aren't yet on time of use rates, prices are going up 6.1 per cent or \$6.12 a month on a typical bill.

They'll pay 6.8 cents a kilowatt hour for the first 600 kilowatt hours of power they use each month – an increase of 0.4 cents.

For the amount above 600 kilowatt hours, they'll pay 7.9 cents a kilowatt hour, and increase of 0.5 cents.