

Senior Legal Hotline

444 North 3rd Street #312, Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 551-2140 or (800) 222-1753 Toll Free in California

ENERGY DEREGULATION



Now most Californians have a choice in buying electric power. This choice could mean savings in your monthly electric bill. However, before switching to a different electric service provider be sure that the provider you select will provide savings and services.

THINGS TO KNOW WHEN SELECTING AN ELECTRIC SERVICE PROVIDER (ESP)

- 1.) If you are thinking of switching to another ESP, compare costs. Know what your average monthly electricity usage is by checking past bills. Make sure you compare electricity bills for the summer and winter months as electricity usage tends to be higher during these months. Electricity usage is expressed in kilowatt hours (kWh).
- 2.) Purchase and installation of a new electric meter is not required.
- 3.) If you decide to switch to a new ESP, you have three days to reconsider your decision. Any contract you sign with a new ESP can be revoked, in writing, within three days of signing it.
- 4.) ESPs only provide electricity. Any problems with equipment, lines, power outages, emergencies, and service must be reported to your current local utility distribution company, even if you have switched to another ESP.

5.) If you switch to another ESP, you may receive more than one electric bill per month. You may receive a bill from your ESP for the cost of electricity and another bill from your local utility distribution company for other services. Always ask how and by whom you will be billed.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Ask about payment options such as equal installments or averaged monthly bills.
- Ask about the minimum length of time, if any, you are required to stay with a new ESP. Beware of long-term contracts that are difficult or costly to terminate!
- Ask about any penalties if you cancel a service contract before the scheduled termination date.
- Ask about late fees and penalties.
- Ask about deposit requirements and if any deposits paid will be returned.
- Ask for a description of low-income programs provided by the ESP.
- Ask for the ESP's official registration number from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). All ESPs must register with the CPUC and have a current registration number. All ESPs registered with the CPUC must follow specific consumer protection rules.
- Ask about other incentives and services that could help reduce the cost of electricity.

The California Public Utilities Commission, located in San Francisco, oversees most providers of essential services to California state residents. If you have any questions about electric restructuring or want to know which ESPs are registered, please call the Electric Education Call Center at (800)-253-0500. To report complaints or problems with any ESP, call (800)649-7570.

If you have any questions regarding energy deregulation and are 60 years or older, please call the Senior Legal Hotline at (916) 551-2140 or (800) 222-1753 toll free in California. Hours of operation are Monday-Friday 9:00-12:00 and 1:00-4:00. Evening hours are available to 7:00 p.m. on Thursdays.