

Tip #2 Find out if you can switch to an off-peak electricity tariff like Economy 7

Economy 7 tariffs give you 7 hours of cheaper rate electricity overnight (usually after midnight and until 7am). Switching to an Economy 7 tariff could therefore cut the cost of your energy bill, depending on how much you charge your vehicle from home as well as how much of your other electricity use you'd be able to shift away from peak times.

Most suppliers offer these tariffs but the process for switching to one varies depending on whether you already have an Economy 7 meter (a special meter that records your night-time electricity use separately from your day-time use).

This guide will help you to decide whether you are likely to benefit and how to go about switching if you do want to go on Economy 7.

How can I find out if an Economy 7 tariff is right for me?

The best way to find the cheapest Economy 7 deals, so you can compare them to standard rate tariffs, is to visit a price comparison site. The [Go Energy Shopping](#) website has a full list of price comparison sites available to you.

When the price comparison site asks you 'Do you have an Economy 7 meter?' click 'Yes'.

If it asks you how much electricity you use during the Economy 7 hours, just give them the best estimate of how much you think you use or how much you think you could realistically shift into the cheap overnight hours if you did switch. When providing this estimate, remember to include the electricity you use for your other electrical appliances, and not just the electricity you use to charge your electric vehicle. If you're really not sure about what numbers to put into this, check out the table below which provides guidance.

Remember: you don't need to shift all your household electricity use into the cheaper hours to save money

The most important loads to consider shifting are the ones that use the most electricity, such as, your washing machine, dishwasher and tumble dryer (remember, it's electricity use not gas that you need to think about because Economy 7 is an electricity only tariff).

Use a home charging point to set your vehicle to charge overnight automatically

If you have a [home charging point](#), you can put your vehicle on a timer so that it charges overnight during the cheap hours, ready in time for when you need it in the morning, which would make it relatively easy to avoid the peak hours and make savings.

How much could I save on an Economy 7 tariff as an EV owner?

The more electricity you use at night, the more you would save. If you have electric heating as well as an electric vehicle (for example, electric night storage heaters) you could save even more money on an Economy 7 tariff.

You should always do a price comparison yourself because how much you will save depends on what the cheapest available standard rate tariff is in your region as well as how much electricity you use to charge your vehicle and how much you use for your other household appliances.

To help, we've done a comparison based on the assumption that you would always charge your vehicle at the off-peak times but that you'd be able to use varying amounts of your other electrical appliances overnight. Remember, the main appliances that you'd need to try to use overnight are your washing machine, dishwasher and tumble dryer because these use quite a lot of electricity but can be run overnight if you put them on a timer (you wouldn't, for example, want or need to wait until midnight to charge your phone, use your computer or watch television!).

We've calculated the savings by comparing the average Economy 7 tariff to the average standard rate electricity tariff based on the most recent data from 2015.

Economy 7 savings for EV drivers who could always charge their EV overnight but with varying other off-peak electricity usage

Tariff	Peak rate (p/kWh)	Off-peak rate (p/kWh)	Standing charge (daily)	Annual bill 0% other use off-peak	Annual bill 10% other use off-peak	Annual bill 20% other use off-peak	Annual bill 30% other use off-peak
Average Economy 7	17	7	21.7	£708	£676	£644	£612
Average flat rate electricity tariff	13.9	13.9	18.9	£685	£685	£685	£685
Savings from switching to the average Economy 7 tariff				-£23	£9	£40	£72

Average prices across all regions for the year 2015 as reported by DECC. In all cases, we assume that 100% of any EV charging that is done from home would be done during the off-peak hours (overnight).
 Energy use calculated at 4,428 kWh, of which 1,240 kWh is for charging electric vehicle and 3,188 is for all other electricity use, which is the median electricity use of the average UK home as reported by DECC. Electricity required to charge an EV assumes that the vehicle is being driven the average annual mileage of a car in the UK (8,000 miles) in a vehicle with a 30kWh battery (like the Nissan Leaf) and that the majority of the charging is done from home (80%) rather than using public charge points.

How can I actually switch to an Economy 7 tariff?

Economy 7 tariffs require the installation of a second 'night time' meter in your home that is able to record your overnight consumption separately from your day-time consumption. This is called an Economy 7 meter.

The process for switching to an Economy 7 tariff therefore varies depending on whether you already have one of these meters. Most people do not have an Economy 7 meter, so, if you're not sure, it's unlikely that you have one.

Switching to an Economy 7 tariff if you don't already have an Economy 7 meter

1. Call up your supplier to find out whether they offer Economy 7
2. If they do, ask them what the unit rates are on their Economy 7 tariff and compare them to the cheapest available flat-rate tariff (using a price comparison website, as described above)
3. If you work out that it will save you money (your supplier should also be able to help you with this), then ask them to install an Economy 7 meter – this should be free but some suppliers may charge up to £50
4. When the meter is installed, you will then be able to switch to that supplier's Economy 7 tariff (or any other Economy 7 tariff, offered by any other supplier)

Switching to an Economy 7 tariff if you already have an Economy 7 meter

If you already have an Economy 7 meter, it is easy to switch between suppliers and onto different Economy 7 tariffs.

To find the cheapest Economy 7 deals, use a price comparison website, as described above. Make sure you check to see whether the cheapest Economy 7 tariff is going to be cheaper for you than a flat-rate tariff (a tariff that doesn't have a cheaper rate overnight).

To help you work this out, you need to think about how much of your other electrical appliances you use overnight. The main ones to consider are your dishwasher, tumble dryer and washing machine, as these use quite a lot of electricity but could potentially be run overnight, especially if you have a delay timer on your machine.

What about Economy 10 tariffs?

You can also get Economy 10 tariffs (which give you 10 hours of cheaper electricity) but you can't compare these on price comparison sites.

You would need to call up energy suppliers individually to find out if they offer Economy 10, what their rates are and if you are eligible for one.

Economy 10 offers three off-peak hours between midday-3pm, two off-peak hours between 5pm-7pm and five off-peak hours between midnight-5am.

