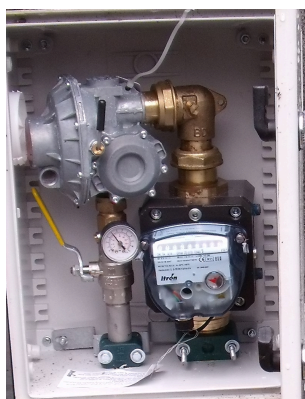


How to Read your Gas Meter

This Factsheet gives advice on how to read your gas meter. More information about saving energy in schools and how to read other types of meters can be found on the Energy in Education website at www.energyineducation.ie.

Why read the meter?

If you want to save energy and money you need to know how much energy you are using. Reading your gas meter will help with this. Your gas account is like a bank account: if you don't monitor it, how can you manage it?



Typical Gas Meter

Regardless of which company you purchase your natural gas from, the meter is read by Gas Networks Ireland (GNI – formally Bord Gáis) on behalf of your utility company. Presently most school meters are read by GNI approximately every four months. The school, however, probably receives a gas bill every month. For months when the meter is not read, the bill is based on estimates of consumption. To obtain a more accurate bill, read your gas meter monthly, and tell your utility company the meter reading, either by phone or online.

The more often you read your meter, the more useful the readings will be in helping you understand and control your gas usage. Weekly readings, and readings before and after each holiday are recommended. It is best to read the meter at the same time of day and same day of the week. It is a good idea to put a reminder in the mobile phone of whoever is going to read the meter. By subtracting one meter reading from another, you can calculate how much gas you have used in that period.

Example 1: Weekly readings:

Reading on Friday, week 2, 3 p.m.:	42,962 m ³ .
Reading on Friday, week 1, 3 p.m.:	42,517 m ³ .
Gas used during 7 days:	445 m ³ .

Where is the gas meter?



Gas meters are in different places in each school, but they are always outside. Some common locations are:

- In a cabinet outside the boiler house
- In a cabinet elsewhere on the outside of the school, perhaps outside a specialist classroom
- In a cabinet near the school boundary
- In a wire cage near the school boundary

Gas pipework is always painted yellow, although the meter itself is not. Some schools believe that they do not have access to their gas meter, but every school does have the right to read their own gas meter. If you are not sure where your meter is, ask the Principal or caretaker. If you cannot gain access, talk to Gas Networks Ireland, who own and read the meter. A key to the enclosure should always be available to School

Management and caretakers in an accessible location in the school.

What do meters look like?

Inside of the meter cabinet or meter cage are components which control the gas coming into the building, and the meter. There are quite a few different types, examples of which are shown here.



Meter inside cabinet

How many meters?

Most schools have just one meter. Some schools may have more than one meter because they have meters

for different buildings. For example, a remote PE hall or a new extension might have its own gas meter. You may receive more than one gas bill per month. Every natural gas meter has a number called a Gas Meter Reference Number, or GPRN, which is shown on the bill (but usually not on the meter). The GPRN is usually on the top right hand side of the bill. You have the same number of gas meters as you have GPRNs.

You need the GPRN to complete SEAI's online energy Monitoring and Reporting System (M&R). Further information about M&R can be found at www.seai.ie.

Reading the meter

Gas meters may look quite different, but reading the meter is easy.



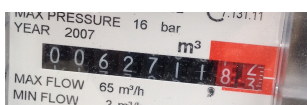
Meter cabinet keyway

The meter cabinet usually requires a triangular shaped key to open it. You can buy one at your local hardware shop, or you may ask your gas supply company to send you one. Open the cabinet and look for reading index numbers. Read the numbers

from left to right. Ignore the numbers in red or surrounded by red and don't worry about rounding up or down. The units are usually printed on the meter next to the reading, and are usually in m³.



This meter measures in units of m³ and is reading 6,986m³.



This one is reading 62,711m³.



This one is reading 17,646m³.

Units of energy

The units of energy on your gas bill are kWh (kilowatt hours). This is the same unit used on your electricity bill, and used in Europe, for reporting building energy use.

Calculating energy use

To calculate energy use in kWh, the quantity must be converted from the m³ read by the meter to kWh, by multiplying by 11.06.

Example 2: Weekly readings:

Reading on Friday, week 2, 3 p.m.:	17,646 m ³ .
Reading on Friday, week 1, 3 p.m.:	17,314 m ³ .
Gas used during 7 days:	332 m ³ .
Multiply by 11.06	11.06
Energy consumed during 7 days	11.06x332 kWh
Energy consumed during 7 days	3,672 kWh

Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)

LPG tanks generally have a meter on the top of the tank, showing approximately the fullness of the tank. Tanks also have steel nameplates welded to the tank body showing capacity. These two items of information can be used to estimate fuel use, or delivery dockets can be used, as for oil. One litre of LPG is 7.09 kWh of energy. Modern tanks have a system which alerts the fuel delivery company automatically when the tank is nearly empty.

Still don't know how to read it?

If you are in doubt about how to read the gas meter after reading this Factsheet, contact your gas provider.

Historical data

If you want to obtain information of how much gas the school has been using over the last 24 months, your gas company or Gas Networks Ireland (in the case of natural gas) will provide this information to you free of charge. Gas Networks Ireland email address for this purpose is gpro@gasnetworks.ie. You must email your GPRN. They will not be able to help you with just your account number or address.

Summary

To save on gas costs, you need to manage your gas use. To do that, you need to read the meter and work out how much gas you are using. You need to know where the meter is in the school. You need to know how to read the meter, and how to calculate energy used, or kWh used, by applying a conversion factor.