



Florida Public Service Commission

# Consumer Bulletin

Braulio L. Baez, Chairman



## PEAK SHIFTING

The time of day when electricity is used can make a big difference to Florida, and ultimately, to you. By practicing “peak shifting” — shifting the time of day when you use such household appliances as your washing machine, vacuum or dishwasher — you can help reduce electric demand during peak times of the day, thereby reducing the overall cost of power in Florida.

A consumer’s demand for electricity is influenced by the electricity-consuming appliances in his or her home or business, and the extent to which those appliances are used. The “load” that a utility must supply, meanwhile, is the total of all customers’ electric demand. Because customers use electricity in different amounts at different times of the day, the load changes over the course of the day, the week and the year, as well as with changes in the weather.

### How Does a Utility Meet the Demand for Electricity?

A utility may generate electricity, purchase power from other utilities, or utilize a combination of both. Unlike most products, electricity cannot be stored after it is produced; it must be generated at the time of demand. Therefore, there are “peak” periods of the day during which utilities must produce additional electricity to meet the demands of their customers. To meet this additional demand for electricity, utilities often use “peaking generators.” These peaking generators, which burn oil or natural gas to produce electricity, are brought on line only at peak periods of the day, and run for short periods of time. While peaking generators generally cost less to build than other types of generators, they also have relatively high fuel costs because they are typically much less efficient in the use of fuel.

### How Does All This Affect the Cost of Electricity?

Your electric rates include the cost for the generating units (if any) that a utility owns and operates, the cost of fuel for those units, the cost of power purchased from other utilities, and the cost of any conservation or load management programs offered by the utility. Reducing the total amount of electricity you use reduces your bill. In addition, reducing electric

use at peak times of the day, or peak shifting, saves expensive fuel that would otherwise be used in a peaking unit. That translates into savings for all customers of that utility.

### How Do I Practice Peak Shifting?

Use electric appliances such as washing machines, clothes dryers, dishwashers and vacuums during non-peak hours, when possible.

Generally, the **BEST** times to use electric appliances in Florida are as follows:

**WINTER**

10 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
9 p.m. - 6 a.m.

**SUMMER**

Midnight - Noon  
8 p.m. - Midnight

Generally, the **WORST** times to use electric appliances in Florida are as follows:

**WINTER**

6 a.m. - 10 a.m.  
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

**SUMMER**

Noon - 8 p.m.

Some utilities offer “load management” programs to help reduce demand during peak periods. Under such programs, a participating customer agrees to allow the utility to control the flow of electricity to certain larger electric appliances, such as heat pumps or water heaters, that are not needed by the customer at peak times of the day.

Call your local electric utility for tips on using energy wisely, and to find out about any load management or conservation programs that may be offered. Call the Florida Public Service Commission at **1-800-342-3552** for more information on energy conservation, or visit us at [www.floridapsc.com](http://www.floridapsc.com).

**Braulio L. Baez is the Chairman of the Florida Public Service Commission. The PSC sets the rates regulated utility companies charge for natural gas, electric and telephone service within the state. In 36 counties, it sets the price you pay for the water you drink, if your water company is privately owned.**