

Electricity rates jolt customers

A rate increase and higher fuel costs boost electric bills on Oahu by double digits

[By Nina Wu](#)

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Aug 06, 2009

Oahu households will notice a significant increase in their electricity bill in August, due in part to higher fuel rates as well as an interim rate increase approved by the state.

The typical household bill (600 kilowatts per hour) on Oahu for the month will jump an average 14.3 percent to \$140.05 from an average \$122.58 in July.

Besides higher fuel rates, which typically are not reflected in bills until 30 to 60 days after the fuel is purchased, this month's numbers on Oahu include the impact of the 4.7 percent interim rate increase that went into effect Monday after being approved by the state Public Utilities Commission, according to Hawaiian Electric Co. spokesman Peter Rosegg.

With that increase, bills were expected to go up by \$6.48 for an Oahu

household, but coupled with the higher fuel costs, the average household bill instead is going up an average of \$17.47.

HECO said the increase will help pay for major capital improvements and increased operating costs incurred

ON THE RISE

Oahu residential electric bills have risen for three straight months. Here are the average monthly rates for 2009 with the percentage change from the previous month:

Month	Average rate	Change
August	\$140.05	+14.3%

over the last several years.

Due to the rate increase, Oahu's electricity bills will have the biggest percentage increase of any of the three islands that HECO serves. Still, Oahu's average household bill is 30.7 percent lower than the high point reached in September 2008, according to Rosegg.

On Maui, the typical bill went up to \$161.37, which is \$14.18, or 9.6 percent, higher than \$147.19 in July. Last month, the rate had increased from June by a mere 0.2 percent. Maui's rates do not include Molokai and Lanai.

The Big Island's typical bill will go up 3.8 percent to \$194.91 compared with \$187.74 in July.

Big Island households will pay the highest average electricity bill out of all three islands.

Maui's increased rates this month are 37.1 percent lower than the peak reached in September 2008. The Big Island's August rates are 29.9 percent lower than the peak last September.

The effective rates, which include fuel and other charges, for August are 21.84 cents/kwh for Oahu, 25.55 cents/kwh for Maui and 30.64 cents/kwh for the Big Island.

July	\$122.58	+1.8%
June	\$120.36	+2.5%
May	\$117.45	-0.4%
April	\$117.94	-0.6%
March	\$118.71	-3.9%
February	\$123.58	-11.1%
January	\$138.98	-12.1%

* A household using 600 kilowatt-hours of electricity

Source: Hawaiian Electric Co.

LIGHTING IT UP

Hawaiian Electric Co.'s rates for August:

Island	August	July	Increase
Oahu	\$140.05	\$122.58	+14.3%
Maui	\$161.37	\$147.19	+ 9.6%
Big Island	\$194.91	\$187.74	+ 3.8%

Source: Hawaiian Electric Co.

Find this article at:

http://www.starbulletin.com/business/20090806_Electricity_rates_jolt_customers.html