

Peaksaver PLUS® Frequently Asked Questions

General

What is peaksaver PLUS®?

peaksaver PLUS® is a program designed to help manage electricity demand in Ontario and reduce the strain on the electricity grid. As a participant, your local electric utility will install a load management device on your central air conditioner, electric water heater, and/or in-ground pool pump. This will allow your appliances to be regulated during peak demand periods such as hot summer weekdays when electricity use is at its highest. Joining **peaksaver PLUS®** will help to reduce the environmental impact of increased electricity production in Ontario.

How does **peaksaver PLUS®** work?

During peak electricity demand periods, your local electric utility will activate the load management device on your enrolled appliance (that is, your air conditioner, water heater, and/or in-ground pool pump) to reduce the power to the appliance for a brief period of time. These activations will only occur on weekdays during the summer between 12 noon and 7 p.m. from May 1 to September 30.

How do I enroll in **peaksaver PLUS®**?

To enroll in **peaksaver PLUS®**, Innisfil Hydro customers must contact Util-Assist (1-888-985-3465).

Will it cost me anything to enroll in **peaksaver PLUS®**?

No. Enrollment is free of charge, and there are no ongoing maintenance costs.

Do I have to participate?

No. The program is entirely voluntary. By enrolling in **peaksaver PLUS®**, participants are helping to reduce the amount of electricity the province needs during periods of increased demand.

Is there an incentive for participating in **peaksaver PLUS®**?

Aside from the satisfaction of knowing that you will be helping to reduce the environmental impact of increased electricity production, you will also receive a free in-home energy display device. This device provides you with real-time feedback on how much electricity you are consuming, when you are consuming it, and how much it is costing you. These continuous updates will allow you to better understand your home's electricity consumption and make decisions that will reduce your energy costs.

What is an in-home Energy Display?

An in-home energy display is a device that provides you with real-time energy consumption and price data to help you monitor the impacts of your actions. You may choose to use this information to reduce and/or shift your consumption pattern from periods of higher price to lower-price periods based on time-of-use rates to help achieve savings on your electricity costs.

If I am unhappy with **peaksaver PLUS®**, can I stop being part of the program?

Yes. Please contact Util-Assist (1-888-985-3465) and speak to a representative.

Who do I call when I have questions or problems?

Questions about **peaksaver PLUS®** should be directed to your participating electric utility.

Activations

When can *peaksaver PLUS*® be activated?

On summer weekdays between 12 noon and 7 p.m. from May 1 to September 30. Activations never occur on weekends or holidays.

How long do activations last?

peaksaver PLUS® activations have varying durations, depending on the appliance:

- Central air conditioner systems are cycled down for 15 minutes out of every 30 minutes.
- Water heaters are turned off for a maximum of four hours
- Pool pumps are turned off for a maximum of four hours

What happens if I'm using my air conditioner, electric water heater, or pool pump during the activation?

During activations, your central air conditioner system's fan will continue to operate so that there will only be a 1° or 2° change in temperature of your home. The electric water heater or pool pump will be shut off completely. Most customers don't notice a difference because the water heater already has heated water in it, which doesn't cool significantly in the four-hour event duration under normal circumstances. Pool pump customers will not experience a noticeable change either.

Will I notice a change in the comfort of my home if my air conditioner is cycled down?

Participating in *peaksaver PLUS*® means that you will maintain control and your comfort will not be affected. When *peaksaver PLUS*® is activated, your air conditioner system's fan will continue to operate. However, in half-hour timeframes, your air conditioner will be adjusted on and off. For the first 15 minutes, it will continue to produce cool air. And for the next 15-minute period, the fan will continue to run to circulate the cool air in your home. These half-hour increments will last no longer than four hours at a time on any one day. Most participants surveyed noted that they could not notice a difference in the temperature or comfort of their homes when the activations occurred.

Will I notice a change in the temperature of my water if my electric water heater is activated?

It is likely that when *peaksaver PLUS*® is activated, your electric water heater will keep the already heated water warm for consumption during the activation period. Most participants in program pilots noted that they could not feel a noticeable difference in the water temperature.

Will I notice a change in the cleanliness of my in-ground pool if my pool pump is activated?

It is unlikely that you will find a noticeable difference in the cleanliness of your in-ground pool during the few activations that may occur during the course of the summer.

How do I request that my equipment not be activated for a particular date?

If you would like to opt out for up to 48 hours on a particular date, please contact your participating electric utility. Electric utilities will require a 48 hour advance notice. Note that *peaksaver PLUS*® will only be activated Monday to Friday between noon and 7 p.m. and between May 1 and September 30.

Will you have access to any other systems in my house? Will you be able to control my whole house?

No. We will not have access to any other system in your house. If you choose to participate in **peaksaver PLUS®**, your electric utility will only have access to the appliances that you choose to enroll (that is, your central air conditioning, electric hot water heater, and/or in-ground pool pump).

Could there be a power surge when the appliances are activated?

No. The technology is designed to avoid this type of occurrence. Activations are timed, which also works to avoid a power surge.

Eligibility

Who can enroll in *peaksaver PLUS®*?

Any residential customer of a participating electric utility with central air conditioning, an electric water heater, and/or a pool pump for an in-ground pool is eligible for **peaksaver PLUS®**.

What if I don't own the house? Can I still enroll?

Yes. If you don't own the property, you can obtain written permission from the owner/landlord to have the devices installed.

Am I eligible if I live in a town home?

Yes. You can enroll if your home has a separate central air conditioning unit, electric water heater, and/or pool pump, and you have an account with a participating electric utility.

If I only have a room air conditioner, can I still participate in *peaksaver PLUS®*?

No. **peaksaver PLUS®** is currently limited to customers with central air conditioning systems, electric water heaters, and/or pool pumps for in-ground pools. We are actively working towards finding a reliable technology to include individuals with window air conditioners into the program. More information will be provided as soon as it becomes available.

You may be interested to know that window air conditioners are eligible to be recycled through our EXCHANGE EVENT program, details are available [here](#).

If I already have a high-efficiency central air conditioning system, can I still participate in *peaksaver PLUS®*?

Yes. Although a high-efficiency system uses less electricity than an older or less efficient one, any and all electricity savings are helpful during times of peak demand when the electricity system is strained. We encourage all eligible homeowners to enroll in **peaksaver PLUS®** and take advantage of the free in-home Energy display offer. This is a useful tool to help see and manage electricity use at home.

I am already signed up for *peaksaver*, am I eligible to participate in *peaksaver PLUS®*?

Yes. The **peaksaver PLUS®** program is an extension of the **peaksaver** program. If you are participating in the **peaksaver** program, you can continue as you always have or join **peaksaver PLUS®** and expand your participation to include your electric water heater and/or pool pump. You'll also receive a free in-home energy display just like new participants. The in-home energy display device provides real-time usage data allowing you to see and make changes to how you manage electricity use in your home.

Installation

Where will the device be installed when I enroll in *peaksaver PLUS*®?

The load management device will be installed on each of the appliances you have specified during enrollment in *peaksaver PLUS*®. By participating, you'll be joining thousands of other Ontarians who are already doing their part to reduce the strain on the electricity system.

Do I have to be home when this is installed?

Yes, you will have to be home. Your participating electric utility will install a load management device on the appliances you have specified (air conditioner, electric water heater and/or pool pump) to accommodate *peaksaver PLUS*®. They will also provide you with an in-home energy display device, which will give you real-time feedback on how much electricity you are consuming, when you are consuming it, and how much it is costing you. They will show you how to use it and how effective it can be in changing your usage to different times of the day to help achieve savings on electricity.

I'm not comfortable with strangers in my house. How will I know if the people who arrive are legitimate?

We understand your concern for security. When the authorized installers come to your door, feel free to ask them for identification to show that they are working on behalf of your participating electric utility. They should also arrive during a predetermined time window. Should you have questions regarding the installer's qualifications, please contact us.

What if they break my system? Will they pay to fix it?

The installation will be done by authorized installers working on behalf of your participating electric utility. Should you have any concerns regarding your equipment or warranties, please contact your local electric utility directly for assistance.

Where will the *peaksaver PLUS*® load management device be installed? Who chooses this?

You must have either a central air conditioner, electric water heater, and/or a pool pump for an in-ground pool to participate. It is your choice if you want the device on any—or all—of these appliances.

Environmental Impact

Why do the Ontario Power Authority and my electric utility have this program anyway?

We are always looking for ways to help our customers and our province conserve electricity and better manage their electricity uses. Initiatives like *peaksaver PLUS*® help everyone in the long run by reducing the strain on our electricity system. The included in-home energy display device also helps to increase awareness about electricity consumption at home through the provision of real-time usage data.

Participating homeowners will be better equipped to manage their consumptions of electricity.

What does the environment have to do with it?

In periods where demand for electricity is very high, it becomes more likely that we will rely on other sources of electricity to meet the shortfall. Often these other sources are not as environmentally friendly and can contribute to air pollution.



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As one household, is it really possible to make a difference by participating?

Absolutely! When just two households participate in **peaksaver PLUS**[®] with their central air conditioning, they can reduce enough electricity demand to meet the average electricity needs of one other household in Ontario during a time of peak demand.

You'll be joining thousands of households across the province already participating in **peaksaver PLUS**[®]. Together, this will allow us to reduce the strain on the electricity system during times of peak demand. By joining, you're making a significant contribution to conserving electricity and helping the reliability of our electricity system.

When peak demand is reduced, it means there is less of a need to produce electricity or purchase it from other jurisdictions.

Businesses must use much more electricity than residential customers. Why are regular homeowners asked to take these measures?

Everyone can help reduce the strain on the electricity system. There is a **peaksaver PLUS**[®] program that is aimed at small commercial businesses that use less than 50kW. If you are a small business owner and would like to find out more, please contact your local electric utility. **peaksaver PLUS**[®] is designed for homes and small business, and there are other conservation programs tailored for large commercial and industrial properties as well. For example, there is a Demand Response program similar to **peaksaver PLUS**[®] wherein companies sign contracts to reduce their electricity consumptions during peak periods and shift their usages to other times of the day when demand has been decreased.