

There are various suppliers of electricity and gas in Austria. Many rumours are in the wind regarding whether it makes sense to change the supplier or not („After all you will pay the same regardless which company you choose“, etc.). What is true and whom can you trust? And: Is switching worthwhile altogether?

What speaks FOR changing the supplier

It is true: Switching energy suppliers can save you money. Especially if you have a high demand of power – caused, for instance, by the fact that your heating works on electricity or you have an electric boiler for the hot water – this can be great advantage.

Another advantage: You wish to improve your climate credentials? There are suppliers that provide you with certified green energy and they are often not even more expensive than competitors!



What speaks AGAINST changing the supplier

If you may have problems to pay your bills on time once in a while – rather stay with the big “close-to-the-state” suppliers such as *Wien Energie* or *EVN*. They usually offer a good service and they are, according to our experience, rather accommodating and helpful when customers face financial difficulties. Some alternative providers respond more readily by involving debt-collecting agencies or even cutting supplies.



You should understand the contract

Read the fine print before you sign the contract. If you find this difficult, go through the contract with a person who can help you. Some of the following **may** be the reason why a supplier offers relatively cheap energy:

- You cannot get out of the contract for 12 or even 24 months.
- The energy price is not fixed (so-called „Float“-plans): Whenever the supplier can get electricity or gas for a low price on the energy market, it will be cheap for you, too, but when the provider has to pay more it will pass additional costs on to you.
- Online-only plans: All communication with the provider is via Internet / Email.
- You do not get payment slips; payment is only possible with Online-Banking and direct debit.
- Many providers invoice the grid charges (see next page) and pass the money on to the grid operator. If a provider does not do so (to save administrative costs), it only sends you the bill for the electricity or the gas itself. In this case, the grid operator sends you a its own bill. This is not more expensive for you but you have to take care of two separate bills.

Green Power

Almost all providers claim to deliver “green energy”. The environmental organisations *Global 2000* and *WWF* have been examining this carefully. If you understand enough German or have someone to assist you, we recommend “to google” their latest report and follow the advice given there. Search for: „**Stromanbieter-Check - Global 2000**“.

What can you get from alternative suppliers?

District heating suppliers cannot be changed.

You can switch to another provider of electricity or gas but this only pertains to the energy itself.

Electricity and gas have to be conducted to you. For using the power lines, gas pipes, etc. the grid operator charges a fee and there is only one such grid operator for the place where you live. That means, you will remain a customer of your grid operator regardless which energy supplier you choose.

Also, changing the supplier will have no effect on the taxes and duties that are part of your energy bill. Grid fees, taxes and duties often add up to about half of your total energy costs and they can only be reduced by using energy sparingly! The **example** below shows an annual invoice issued by *Wien Energie*. *Wien Energie* also collects the grid fees and passes them on to *Wiener Netze* (the grid operator in Vienna):

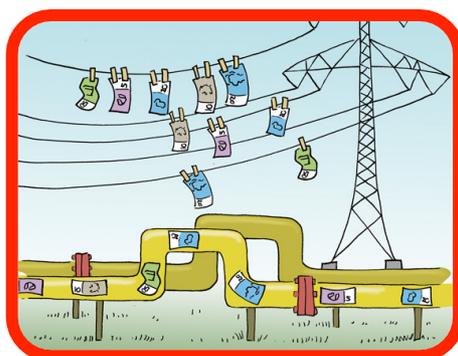
Berechnung

Position	Zeitraum	Verrechnungsbasis	Verrechnungspreis	Nettobetrag EUR
Energie-Grundpreis	18.12.2019 - 18.12.2020	366 Tage	12,600000 EUR/Jahr	12,63
Energie-Arbeitspreis				
Mengenzone 1	18.12.2019 - 18.12.2020	5.719 kWh	3,3500 Cent/kWh	191,59
Energiekosten				204,22
Netznutzung-Grundpreis	18.12.2019 - 18.12.2020	366 Tage	36,000000 EUR/Jahr	36,10
Netznutzung-Arbeitspreis				
Mengenzone 1	18.12.2019 - 31.12.2019	375 kWh	1,5055 Cent/kWh	5,65
Mengenzone 1	01.01.2020 - 18.12.2020	5.344 kWh	1,4302 Cent/kWh	76,43
Entgelt für Messleistungen	18.12.2019 - 18.12.2020	366 Tage	16,2000 EUR/Jahr	16,24
Netzkosten				134,42
Gebrauchsabgabe Energie	18.12.2019 - 18.12.2020			12,25
Gebrauchsabgabe Netznutzung	18.12.2019 - 18.12.2020			8,07
Erdgasabgabe				
18.12.2019 - 31.12.2019	375 kWh	0,5841 Cent/kWh	2,19	
01.01.2020 - 18.12.2020	5.344 kWh	0,5825 Cent/kWh	31,13	
Steuern und Abgaben				53,64
Summe exkl. USt.				392,28

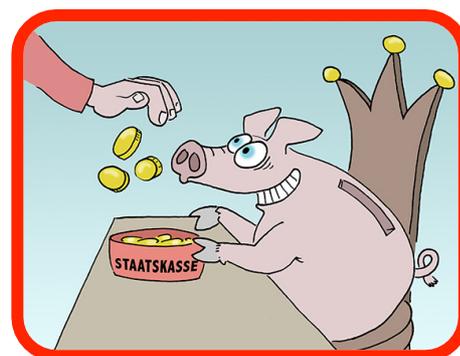
Energy costs: This is the only part of the energy bill that is effected by changing the provider!



The **grid fees** will remain the same if you change the provider!



The **taxes and duties** will also remain the same if you change the provider!



How to find a good supplier?

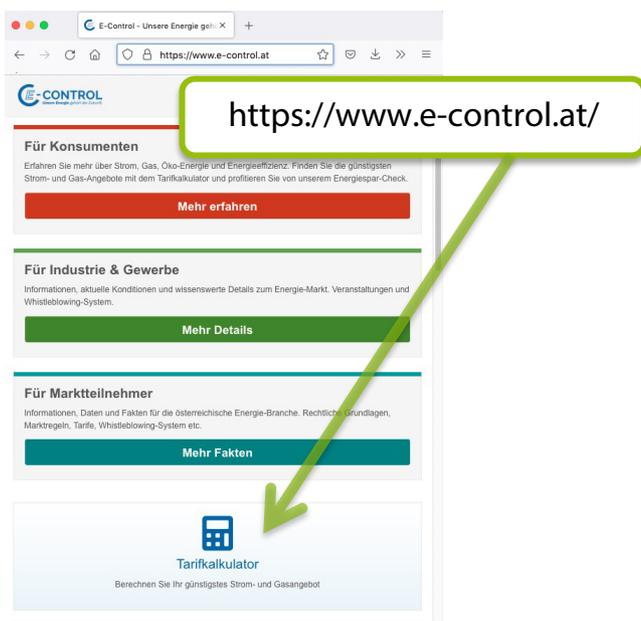
Never, should you agree to a sales pitch with an energy supplier at your door or on the street! Perhaps you are offered lottery tickets, some tempting months of free energy or you are told how much money you can save. However, what is often withhold are details buried in the fine print. We know of many customers who had severe problems with energy suppliers they "met in the street"!



Comparing offers

There are several **online tools** that allow you to compare the offers of different suppliers.

The biggest and best known is the **“Tarifkalkulator”** of E-Control. E-Control is a government agency and regulator for electricity and gas markets in Austria. It is not trying to sell you anything; the **“Tarifkalkulator”** generates a list of all suppliers that can provide electricity or gas at your address. This list will display the cheapest supplier at the top and the most expensive one at the bottom.



If you can provide the necessary details in German (see on the right), using the web interface is recommendable. If this is difficult for you, you can also call E-Control and enquire whether a switching to another supplier makes sense in your case:

Tel.: 0800 21 20 20

In both instances – using the web interface or the phone – you should be with someone who knows the German language to help you. The Online Tarifkalkulator should be available in English as well (but was not when this information sheet was edited).

Note: Most suppliers will offer new customers special conditions (often for the first year). You can see them by selecting **“ja”** (“yes”) at **„Wechselrabatte miteinbeziehen“** (“include discounts for switchers”); choose **“nein”** (“no”) if you want to see what people pay who have been customers for a longer period of time.

TARIFkalkulator

The screenshot shows the Tarifkalkulator web interface. It features a navigation bar with 'Strom' (Electricity) and 'Gas' buttons. Below this, there are input fields for 'Ihre Postleitzahl und Ihr Netzbetreiber' (Your postal code and network operator), 'Wie wollen Sie Ihren Verbrauch angeben?' (How do you want to specify your consumption?) with options 'Einfach' (Simple), 'Haushaltsgröße' (Household size), and 'Weitere...' (More...), 'Ist Ihr Zähler ein Smart-Meter?' (Is your meter a smart meter?) with 'Ja' (Yes) and 'Nein' (No) buttons, 'Ihr Verbrauch in kWh / Jahr' (Your consumption in kWh / year) input field, and 'Einmalige Wechselrabatte miteinbeziehen' (Include one-time switching discounts) with 'Ja' (Yes) and 'Nein' (No) buttons. There are also dropdown menus for 'Ihre Marke' (Your brand) and 'Ihr Produkt' (Your product), and a 'Neuer Lieferant bei Übersiedlung?' (New supplier when moving?) question with 'Ja' (Yes) and 'Nein' (No) buttons. At the bottom, there is a large blue 'Abfrage starten' (Start query) button and a link to 'Formular leeren und neu starten' (Clear form and restart).