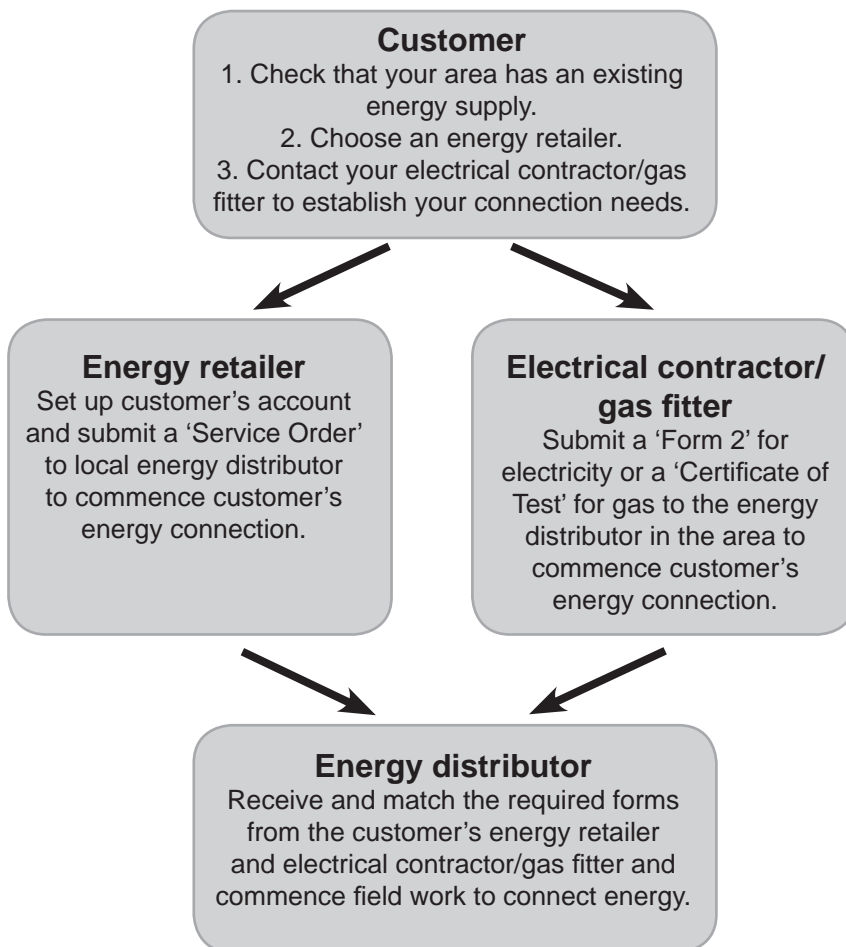


HOW TO GET CONNECTED FOR NEWLY BUILT PREMISES



The Energy Ombudsman Queensland (EOQ) often receives complaints about delays in the connection of electricity and gas supply to newly built residences. Because energy distribution (the poles, wires and pipelines) and energy retailing (the accounts and billing) are carried out by separate companies, new connections can only occur once your energy retailer and electrical contractor/gas fitter have both sent the required forms to your energy distributor to begin the connection process. Sometimes processing delays and errors in submission of these forms can set back some new connections for several weeks.

If you're building a new house/premises, it is important to begin the process to get your energy connected as soon as possible to avoid delays in the connection of electricity/gas. It's not as simple as flicking a switch and it can't happen overnight. If you are well informed, prepared, and factor the connection time period into your building plans, the process will hopefully run smoothly and on time. In order for a new connection to happen, the following steps must take place:



ABOUT EOQ


The Energy Ombudsman Queensland is a free and independent dispute resolution and mediation service for Queensland's energy consumers.

We are committed to providing an effective, high-quality, fair and confidential service for domestic and small business energy consumers who have been unable to resolve a problem with their energy supplier.

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Step 1 - Check that your area has an existing energy supply

If the new connection is for a residential supply in an urban/rural area, check if the power supply is underground or overhead. If overhead, and there are houses on either side of your property, are they both already connected? If underground, can you see green energy supply pillars on the footpath at the front of your property? If the answer is yes, you can safely assume that supply is available and you will need to lodge an application for supply with an energy retailer. In areas that don't already have an electricity or gas network, you may have to pay for the cost of extending the existing network to your property. Contact your local electricity or gas distributor for further information if you don't have an existing energy supply. EOQ cannot assist people with complaints about the **cost** of electricity connection, only **delays** in connection.

Step 2 - Choose an energy retailer

In most cases, you can open an account over the telephone by contacting an energy retailer of your choice. For a full list of energy retailers, visit www.eoq.com.au. Not all of the retailers listed may sell energy in your area.

Step 3 - Choose a standard contract or market contract

There are two main types of energy contracts available for Queensland residential and small business energy consumers: standard retail contracts and market (or negotiated) contracts. A standard retail contract is the basic type of energy contract available to all Queensland energy consumers. All consumers have a right to be supplied energy on a standard retail contract and are under no obligation to sign a market contract. Consumers who are in a standard retail contract are on the Queensland Government's regulated electricity price. Market contracts are negotiated agreements between you and your energy retailer. These types of contracts vary from the regulated terms and conditions of a standard retail contract. They outline all the terms and conditions you have negotiated, including things like price, service standards, fees and charges, billing and payment arrangements and penalties for early termination/cancellation. While all Queensland customers are entitled to enter a market contract with a retailer of their choice, it is up to the energy retailers to decide which customers they will offer their market contracts to. You can always ring around to see if an energy retailer wants your business.

Step 4 - Establish your identity

Driver's licence: You may be asked for the details included on your driver's licence or other form of photo identification.

Pensioner/concession: A Queensland Government electricity and gas rebate is available to eligible pensioners, holders of a Queensland Government Senior Card or Pensioner Concession Card. You should make sure that your energy retailer has these details and, if you are eligible, your rebate will be credited to your account with each bill.

Password: You can put a password on your account so next time you contact your energy retailer you can save time by not having to provide your personal details every time you ring.

Establish any authorised people: Under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Commonwealth), energy suppliers and EOQ are only allowed to assist the actual energy account holder with an enquiry, request or complaint about an energy account. So if you have a partner, spouse or flatmate who will also be responsible for the energy account, you might wish to include them as an 'authorised person' so either of you can make an enquiry or complaint about your energy account.

Step 5 - Provide the correct, full address for connection

Sometimes delays in connection occur because of mix-ups with addresses. Ensure your retailer has the correct, full address of the property that requires connection. It is recommended that you use the council plan to get the correct address. Delays are also caused when people provide their current address details instead of the address where the new connection is required.

Step 6 - Service Order

Once your account has been established, your energy retailer must send a Service Order to the energy distributor in your area to commence the energy connection process.

Step 7 - Contact your electrical contractor/gas fitter

You must also contact your electrical contractor/gas fitter to establish your energy connection. They must submit a 'Form 2' for electricity and a 'Certificate of Test' for gas to the energy distributor in your area.

Step 8 - Energy distributor to commence connection process

Your local energy distributor cannot begin the connection process until they have received the required forms from your energy retailer and electrical contractor or gas fitter. Energy distributors will then validate basic information on both forms and send an acceptance to your energy retailer. Most electricity distributors aim to connect your energy supply within five business days of receiving both forms from your energy retailer and electrical contractor. Gas connections are usually completed within 15 business days of receiving both forms from your energy retailer and gas fitter.

Step 9 - Field crew undertakes work on site

Sometimes your energy distributor may not be able to proceed with the energy connection work due to unforeseen circumstances, such as: bad weather; unsafe site conditions; required upgrades to the network; no access to the site; site not ready for energy distributor; traffic control required; or work done by electrical contractor/gas fitter not meeting energy distributor's requirements.