

Frequently Asked Questions: Triad Management

Our FAQs are designed to help you understand how your energy use and the type of contract you have will determine how you might be impacted by Triads.

What is a Triad?

Triads are the three highest half-hour periods of electricity demand between November and February that are more than ten days apart.

What is the purpose of Triads?

Triads are used by National Grid to determine its annual charge for transmission. National Grid charge the suppliers who use that information to determine their costs to supply.

What is the impact of Triads?

Transmission costs affect all electricity consumers, but some are affected more directly. If your business has a half-hourly settled meter, your transmission costs are directly related to your consumption during those three peak periods. If your business uses a lot of electricity during the Triad periods, you will pay more for electricity than a business that uses the same overall level of energy, but with a lower level of consumption during those three periods. If you have a non half-hourly settled meter, then your supply costs, as far as transmission is concerned, is averaged based on expected consumption during the periods.

When do the Triads typically happen?

The period of highest electricity consumption is usually during cold weather in the late afternoon/early evening. This is when domestic consumption peaks for the tea-time period and is met with industrial demand.

When will I know when there is a risk of a Triad?

Although National Grid cannot forecast the Triads, it does issue notices when there is likely to be a 'tight margin' between the apparent available power and expected demand. Many suppliers will often respond by issuing Triad warnings to their customers. Power Direct Ltd also offers a Triad warning service which alerts subscribed customers by email when a warning has been issued.

Can I do anything to lessen the impact?

Yes! If you are able to control the amount of energy you use between the beginning of November and the end of February – especially when a warning is issued – this will reduce the prices presented to you at your next renewal, or will reduce the reconciliation bill in March if you are on a pass-through contract (it may even result in a partial refund).

How can I reduce consumption during a potential Triad?

We recognise that some businesses are more able to adjust their energy use than others. Since alerts are usually issued on the day before, or the morning of the day of a potential Triad, businesses that are able to should develop an energy efficiency strategy that is ready to activate when needed. Some businesses choose to operate a different working pattern during the winter period, so that working hours start earlier and finish before 4.00 p.m. Equally, some businesses with their own back-up power generator may be able to go off-grid during a warning. Other businesses try to ensure that energy efficiency measures are adopted more generally, such as avoiding using standby functions for computers and appliances that are not being used. Care homes who have limited opportunity to reduce consumption during the peak tea-time period can make sure that energy-consuming tasks such as laundry is done overnight. Whatever strategy is considered, a cost-benefit analysis will determine what adjustments are feasible or rational.

I'm in a fixed contract, what does it mean for me?

You won't feel any effect of adjusting your consumption during the Triads while your contract is live. But, when you renegotiate for a new contract, the supplier will build in a higher margin for the transmission costs if you have consumed a larger amount during the Triad periods, or less for a lower consumption.

I'm in a pass-through contract, what does it mean for me?

When National Grid has announced the Triads in March, it will reconcile the charges from the energy suppliers which will be passed on to you as an adjustment to your price – which may be up or down, depending on your consumption.

I'm in a flexible contract, what does it mean for me?

When National Grid has announced the Triads in March, it will reconcile the charges from the energy suppliers which will be passed on to you as an adjustment to your price – which may be up or down, depending on your consumption.

When will the Triads be confirmed?

In March, National Grid will determine the highest three peaks throughout the period and assess the applicable transmission costs.