

Summary: Ontario Distributor Electricity Invoice Requirements

- The government's authority regarding the form of electricity bills for low-volume consumers is established by s. 79.17 of the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998.
 - Specifically, section 79.17 (1) stipulates that *'The Minister may require that invoices issued in respect of electricity to consumers who are members of a class of consumers prescribed by the regulations meet requirements to be prescribed by the regulations or be in a form approved by the Minister'*.
- Several regulations under the OEB Act, (OEBA) the Electricity Act, 1998 (EA) and the Ontario Rebate for Electricity Consumers Act, 2016 (ORECA), prescribe the content, and where applicable, specific language that must appear on consumer bills.
- O.Reg. 275/04: *'Information on Invoice to Low-Volume Consumers of Electricity'* is the main regulation which prescribes specific content and wording which must be included on residential and small business bills. Items mandated by O.Reg. 275/04 include:
 - The inclusion of the heading 'Your Electricity Charges'
 - The inclusion of 4 sub headings in the following order "Electricity", "Delivery", "Regulatory" and "Debt Retirement Charge" (DRC),
 - Specific requirements for inclusion under each of the sub-headings, for example:
 - Electricity: the invoice must indicate clearly and separately the amount of electricity consumed, the commodity price for the electricity and any other information related to the consumption of electricity that may be required as the result of other regulations or OEB requirements
 - Delivery: O.Reg. 275/04 specifies that the bill must indicate the total delivery charge and also lists the various charges which must be included in the calculation of the total delivery charge
 - Regulatory Charges: O.Reg. 275/04 specifies that the bill must indicate the total regulatory charge and also lists the various charges which must be included in the calculation of the total Regulatory charge
 - DRC: if the bill is for a residential consumer after December 31, 2015 then the DRC payable should be listed as zero
 - The inclusion of:
 - The historical consumption of electricity by the consumer that enables the consumer to compare electricity consumption from the current billing period to electricity consumption from earlier billing periods
 - Consumption information as measured by the meter
 - Messaging related to Conservation, Renewable or Alternative Energy Sources, the DRC exemption and/or OESP, as appropriate. Actual messaging may be prescribed (content, form, invoice location) by the Minister

- A glossary explaining the 4 sub-heading items in prescribed language
 - Information on how to contact the LDC
- O. Reg 364/16 (Invoicing Requirements) under the Ontario Rebate for Electricity Consumers Act, 2016 also makes a number of requirements for LDCs with respect to invoicing requirements
 - On-bill messaging requirements:
 - Must label the credit as “8% Provincial Rebate”
 - The invoice must set out, in a location where conservation or other utility messages to consumers are usually placed, the following statement: “The Ontario government is providing a rebate on your electricity costs equal to the provincial portion of HST”.
 - On-envelope requirements:
 - i. set out the following statement in an appropriate location on the face of the envelope: “Ontario is helping reduce electricity costs for families, businesses and farms”, and
 - ii. include, in a reasonably prominent location on the face of the envelope, in a reasonably prominent font size, the words “8% Provincial Rebate”.
 - Bill insert requirements:
 - 1. The Ontario government trillium logo must appear in a reasonably prominent place on the face of the bill insert.
 - 2. The words “8% Provincial Rebate” must appear in a reasonably prominent location on the face of the bill insert.
 - 3. The insert must contain the following wording:
 - On January 1, 2017, your electricity costs went down 8%.
 - Ontario’s government is reducing electricity costs by rebating an amount equal to the provincial portion of the HST on your monthly hydro bill. That’s an 8% rebate for Ontario families, and on average will mean \$130 more in your pocket each year.
 - This is part of Ontario’s plan to help people with the costs of everyday living by reducing electricity costs. Across Ontario, about five million residential consumers, farms and small businesses will benefit from this rebate.
 - *[Insert Electricity vendor or unit sub-meter provider name]* will implement these savings onto your bill by July 1, 2017. Applicable savings will be retroactive to January 1, 2017.

- A number of OEB Codes set out requirements related to customer billing (the Distribution System Code, the Standard Supply Service Code and the Retail Settlement Code) however these requirements largely relate to other related aspects of billing e.g. billing accuracy and corrections, frequency of bill issuance, equal billing, retailer/distributor consolidated billing and estimated billing.