WHAT IS HOT WATER LOAD CONTROL?

Load control temporarily interrupts electricity supply to hot water cylinders to manage the peak demand on the Network, this is typically between 7:00am to 11:00am and 5.00pm to 9.00pm mainly during winter months for customers on Controlled 20 price option, for Night and Night Boost customers the control times are fixed at 7am to 11pm for Night with Night Boost control times being 7am to 1pm & 4pm to 11pm. Following a hot water control periods it may take some time for your hot water cylinder to reach its normal operating temperature and, if a lot of hot water is used during that time, some customers may run out of hot water.

- Used to limit demand for electricity at peak times on the distribution network
- Mainly used during winter morning and evening periods (May-September)
- It shouldn't mean cold water unless a customer uses up all the hot water stored in cylinder

WHY DO WE LOAD CONTROL?

Turning off the hot water heating during peak times helps reduce the amount of peak electricity being used, and prevents the electricity network overloading. Hot water can be heated at non-peak times rather than during the peak when households need electricity for heating and cooking. Essentially, it is a simple, effective way of flattening out the peaks and troughs of demand for electricity, meaning lower costs to consumers.

You can see the live status of our Control 20 price options here

DOES THIS TURN OFF THE HOT WATER ALTOGETHER?

No. Load control only turns off the electricity supplying the element that heats the water in your hot water cylinder. The hot water already stored in the cylinder can still be used and will stay hot or warm for several hours. The difference is it won't be reheated during load control periods. Once the hot water in the cylinder is used, the cold water will not be reheated until load control ceases.

HOW CAN I CONSERVE HOT WATER?

A typical hot water cylinder will retain its temperature over the period we hot water load control provided it is at operating temperature and there is limited hot water usage over the period of control. By understanding the typical periods of load control and reducing hot water consumption before, during or immediately after a load control period the cylinder will take less time to return to its normal operating temperature.

Other measures that can be taken include reducing the heat loss from your hot water cylinder (using a cylinder wrap) and/or setting your cylinders temperature to 60°C or above which can extend how long the hot water will last for versus those set at a lower temperature. Refer to the Energywise website for helpful hint on how to save on hot water.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM HAVING THE HOT WATER HEATING TURNED OFF?

Yes. Customers can choose a price plan where Electra does not control their hot water, however these customers will not receive a kWh discount compared to those who allow control of hot water.

Tariff changes are arranged through your Retailer who will advise you of any additional charges incurred to change from a controlled to an uncontrolled rate. For further information on Electra's tariffs please click here.

DOES IT COST MORE TO HEAT A HOT WATER CYLINDER IF IT HAS BEEN SWITCHED OFF BY A LOAD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM?

No. In fact, there may be marginally less electricity used overall if reheating a cold cylinder than keeping a cylinder at the temperature set point with uninterrupted electricity supply.

HOW DOES THE SYSTEM TURN OFF JUST THE WATER HEATING?

There are two ways used for turning off hot water heating, depending on which area you live in.

In the network 1) A system known as ripple control is used in these areas. Once power usage reaches maximum limits, the computerised system in our network control room sends out coded signals across the network. When the signal reaches a household meter board a relay recognises the signal and switches off the electricity supply to the hot water cylinder. When power demand eases, another signal is sent out to turn the hot water cylinders back on.

2) A system known as the pilot wire system is used. Once power usage reaches maximum limits, the computerised system in our network control room sends out signals to the relevant substations around the region. These substations have switches which then send out the load management instruction over a separate wire from the mains supply. This wire is connected to a relay in a household meter board, and once it receives the instruction the relay wire switches off electricity supply to the hot water cylinder. When power demand eases, another signal is sent out to turn the hot water cylinders back on.