



# talk about micro-generation

August 2009

## What you need to know about micro-generation

Micro-generation is the term used to describe generation of environmentally-friendly electricity on a small scale—for individual customer use. In Alberta, micro-generation is one megawatt or less of electricity generation that is connected to the distribution system.

Alberta's *Micro-generation Regulation* (announced in February 2008) is the set of rules that allows electricity customers to generate their own environmentally friendly electricity and receive credit for any power they don't use and send to the electricity grid.

With micro-generation, the electricity customer is also the owner and operator of the micro-generator.

To qualify as a micro-generator, the customer's generating unit must:

- use renewable or alternative energy technologies;
- be sized to meet all or a portion of the customer's electricity needs (load);
- have a generating capacity smaller than one megawatt; and
- produce electricity primarily for the customer's own use.

How is electricity delivered to my home now? Does this change if I am a micro-generator?

In Alberta, large generators or power plants produce electricity, which is sent through the transmission (grid) and then distribution (wires) systems to homes, farms businesses and industry. Smaller generation may also be connected to the distribution system.

As a micro-generator, you would produce some or all of the electricity you use. In addition, excess electricity would get sent back into the grid (through the distribution system) and you would be credited for that supply against future consumption on your electricity bill.

What types of renewable or alternative energy technologies can be used?

Options include solar panels, small-scale hydro, wind, biomass, micro-cogeneration and fuel cells.

What else do I need to know before I apply to become a micro-generator?

Before becoming a micro-generator, customers need to be aware of the principal bodies they will be working with.

*Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC):* the AUC is the provincial regulator of investor-owned electric utilities.

The AUC is responsible for overseeing implementation of the *Micro-generation Regulation* and has developed the application and approval process.

The AUC is also responsible for settling any disputes that might come up between a customer and a distribution system owner.

*Distribution company or wire service provider:* this company owns the distribution system for your home, farm, business or industry. The distribution system carries electricity from the provincial transmission lines to your home, farm, business or industry.

How do I apply to become a micro-generator? What happens after I apply?

All customers who want to become a micro-generator must apply to the AUC and their distribution company to get approval to connect and operate a generating unit.

The AUC has a set of guidelines that provide specific details and considerations. These guidelines are available at [www.auc.ab.ca](http://www.auc.ab.ca).



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The first step in applying is to contact your distribution company to inform them that you plan to install a micro-generator. To find out who your distribution company is, contact the Utilities Consumer Advocate at [www.ucahelps.gov.ab.ca](http://www.ucahelps.gov.ab.ca) or toll-free at 310-4-UCA. Your distribution company will also be listed on your electricity bill.

After notifying your distribution company of your intent to become a micro-generator, there are a series of steps that must be completed. These steps are part of the AUC's guidelines and include, but are not limited to:

- consulting with an electrical contractor;
- getting municipal permits; and
- preparing a site plan.

When these steps have been completed, an application may be submitted. The AUC supplies the application form as part of its guidelines. The application form is submitted to your distribution company.

Will I need a new or different meter in order to send excess electricity to the grid?

Yes. A meter that can measure electricity flow in both directions is necessary to determine how much power is actually sent back to the grid.

Who pays for the connection of micro-generator to the distribution system? Who pays for the new meters that are required?

The reasonable costs of interconnection and meter infrastructure are shared by all customers in the distribution company's service area.

The AUC regulates the distribution companies to ensure the costs they are passing to their customers are just and reasonable.

Municipal assessment and taxation

If you have any questions about micro-generation and how it effects your property assessment and taxes, please contact your local assessor or municipality.

Who do I call if I have questions about the application process?

The Alberta Utilities Commission  
[www.auc.ab.ca](http://www.auc.ab.ca)  
310-0000, then 780-427-9362

Who do I call if I have questions about my distribution company or electricity bill?

The Utilities Consumer Advocate  
[www.ucahelps.gov.ab.ca](http://www.ucahelps.gov.ab.ca)  
310-4UCA

Who do I contact for a copy of the Micro-generation Regulation?

Alberta Queen's Printer  
[www.qp.alberta.ca](http://www.qp.alberta.ca)

This document is also available online at [www.energy.alberta.ca](http://www.energy.alberta.ca), choose Electricity; Legislation, Guidelines and Policies; and Acts and Regulations.

Other useful websites:

Climate Change Central  
[www.climatechangecentral.com](http://www.climatechangecentral.com)

Ecologo  
<http://www.ecologo.org/en/>