

# Investigation Process

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## Usage Dispute Investigation

### Step 1: Review Account History

- Pull up 12-24 months of billing history
- Compare current usage to historical patterns
- Look for seasonal trends
- Identify any anomalies

### Step 2: Verify Meter Reading

- Check read type (actual vs. estimated)
- Review previous read and current read
- Calculate usage (current - previous)
- Check for meter reading errors or transposed numbers

### Step 3: Check for Known Issues

- Any reported outages during billing period?
- Meter test results on file?
- Previous disputes or concerns?
- Smart meter communication issues?

### Step 4: Analyze Usage Patterns

- Daily usage breakdown (if smart meter available)
- Peak vs. off-peak consumption
- Sudden spikes or unusual patterns
- Compare to similar homes in area (carefully - don't share other customer info)

### Step 5: Environmental Factors

- Weather data for billing period
- Heating/cooling degree days
- Compare to same period last year

### **Red flags that suggest legitimate issues:**

- Usage doubled or tripled with no explanation
- Previous month was estimated, this month actual
- Meter reading shows impossible jump (like 10,000 kWh increase)
- Customer's explanation aligns with lower usage
- Pattern doesn't match occupancy

### **Red flags that suggest billing is correct:**

- Usage aligns with seasonal patterns
- Consistent with previous years
- Weather was extreme during this period
- Customer mentions new appliances or lifestyle changes
- Daily usage data shows consistent consumption

## **Rate/Pricing Dispute Investigation**

### **Step 1: Verify Rate Class**

- Check customer's rate plan
- Confirm they're on the correct tariff
- Review any rate changes during billing period

### **Step 2: Recalculate Charges**

- Manually verify energy charges (kWh x rate)
- Check service charge application
- Verify delivery charges
- Confirm tax calculations

### **Step 3: Compare to Previous Bills**

- Have rates changed?
- Are fees consistent with past bills?
- Any new charges introduced?

### **Step 4: Check for Rate Plan Changes**

- Did customer switch plans?

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- Any promotional rates that expired?
- Special program enrollments?

## Billing Error Investigation

### Step 1: Review Transaction History

- Check all charges applied
- Verify payment applications
- Look for duplicate billing
- Check adjustment history

### Step 2: Verify Service Dates

- Confirm service start/stop dates
- Check for overlapping billing periods
- Verify final bill processing

### Step 3: System Audit

- Check for system errors or glitches
- Review automated charge applications
- Verify manual adjustments (if any)

## Meter Dispute Investigation

### Step 1: Remote Diagnostics (Smart Meters)

- Check meter communication status
- Review error logs
- Verify readings are transmitting correctly
- Compare meter data to billed data

### Step 2: Physical Inspection (If Necessary)

- Schedule meter reading verification
- Check for tampering or damage
- Verify meter is assigned to correct account

- Confirm meter multiplier is correct

**Step 3: Meter Test**If concerns persist:

- Schedule formal meter accuracy test
- Tests typically take 5-7 business days
- Meter must be tested at an accredited facility
- Results determine if meter was within acceptable tolerance (+/- 2%)

**Important:** Meter tests may have a fee (\$50-75) that's refunded if meter is found faulty.

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