



KEEPING AN EYE ON ENERGY COSTS

Offers of support for the Tübingen administrative district



The Energy Advice Team at the Verbraucherzentrale Baden-Württemberg e.V. (Consumer Advice Centre) can provide advice on a wide range of issues related to the subject of energy. Our one-to-one advice sessions are available in 13 advice centres across Baden-Württemberg. The Consumer Advice Centre for Baden-Württemberg offers neutral, independent advice and is not tied to any particular provider. This brochure is intended as a guide for consumers who have questions on the subject of energy/energy costs. The brochure gives you an overview of the various organisations who may be able to help and provides tips and fast solutions for problems you may be experiencing.

If you have any questions, you can contact the Energy Advice Team at the Consumer Advice Centre for Baden-Württemberg directly:



Verbraucherzentrale Baden-Württemberg e.V.
Paulinenstraße 47, 70178 Stuttgart
Tel.: **0711 669110**
Email: energieberatung@vz-bw.de

KEEPING AN EYE ON ENERGY COSTS

Offers of support for Tübingen

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reducing your energy consumption

Energy Advice Team at the Verbraucherzentrale
Baden-Württemberg e. V. (Consumer Advice Centre)

- Basis-Check 4
- Advice centres in the Tübingen area..... 5

- Cooling and freezing food 10
- Cooking and baking..... 10
- Hot water 11
- Lighting, computers and TV..... 11
- Saving energy in a rented property 12

Tips on saving energy

Simple tips to help you save energy in the home

- Your potential annual savings..... 6
- Heating 8
- Ventilation 9
- Washing & drying 9

Energy debts

What should I do if I can't pay
my energy bills?

- Threat of disconnection – what should I do? 14
- Loans to pay off electricity debts 17
- Where can I get further advice? 19

4 | Reducing your energy consumption



**ENERGY ADVICE TEAM AT THE
VERBRAUCHERZENTRALE
BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG E.V.
(CONSUMER ADVICE CENTRE)**



BASIS-CHECK

Consumers can save a lot of energy by making just a few simple changes. Our Basis-Check can help by providing an overview of your electricity and water consumption and highlighting some easy ways of making savings.

Advisory service:

Our Basis-Check will help you to find ways of saving energy. An energy advisor will come to your home to perform the check and will answer any questions you may have on your energy consumption. You will be offered help with the following topics:

⚙️ **Saving electricity**

⚙️ **Heating and ventilation**

Your energy advisor will also be happy to answer any questions you may have on your heating bill.



HOW DO I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT FOR A BASIS-CHECK?

1. You arrange an appointment via our free-of-charge hotline **0800-809802400**
2. The advisor will come to your home.
3. The consultation will take about an hour.
4. Following the consultation, you will be sent a short report, which should arrive within four weeks. This will give you the opportunity to read through everything again, and will also include some tips!

Important note: The report is NOT an expert assessment!

 **ADVICE CENTRES IN THE
TÜBINGEN ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT**

Consumer Advice Centre in Reutlingen



**Verbraucherzentrale Baden-Württemberg e.V.
Reutlingen Advice Centre**

Kanzleistraße 20
72764 Reutlingen

You can call **0711 669110** to book an appointment for a Basis-Check or to find out about all the other services provided by the Consumer Advice Centre.

Our Basis-Checks are carried out in collaboration with the Agentur für Klimaschutz Kreis Tübingen gGmbH (Climate Protection Agency for the Tübingen district).



Climate Protection Agency for the Tübingen district

The Climate Protection Agency for the Tübingen district can provide advice on all issues related to the subject of "energy". They can offer you free advice on saving energy. Their advisors are independent and offer neutral advice.



Agentur für Klimaschutz Kreis Tübingen gGmbH

Doblerstraße 13
72074 Tübingen

Tel. **07071 567 960**

info@agentur-fuer-klimaschutz.de

The phones are manned during the following hours:

Monday and Tuesday:

08:30 am – 12:00 pm

and 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Wednesday:

08:30 am – 12:00 pm

and 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Friday: 08:30 am – 12:00 pm

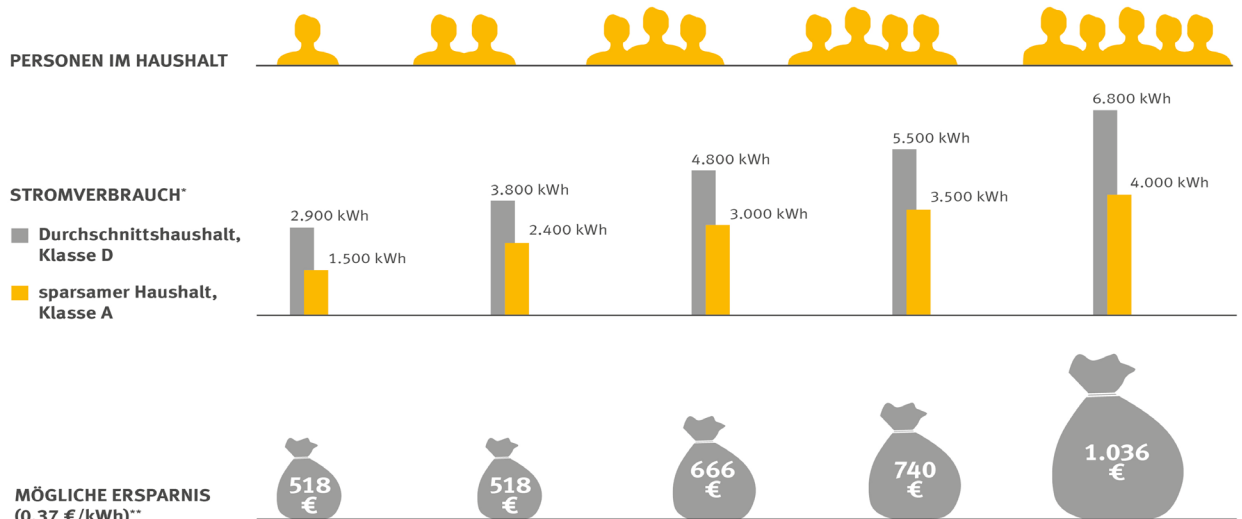
6 | Tips on saving energy

Energy costs – meaning costs for hot water, heating and electricity – are very high in Germany. It is worth making efforts to use less energy so that you can save money.

You can see here you how much you could save if you use less energy:

ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION

Your potential annual savings



** Quelle: strom-report.de
Prognose des durchschnittlichen Haushaltsstrompreises für 2023

* Daten: Stromspiegel Deutschland 2021/22,
Werte für Ein- und Zweifamilienhaus mit elektrischer Warmwasserbereitung (Klasse A–G)

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO HEAT MY HOME?

We feel comfortable when the room temperature is between 18 and 22 degrees Celsius. Depending on which room we are in, we may also be happy with other temperatures. Here is a brief overview:

- Living room:** 20 degrees
- Bedroom:** 16-18 degrees
- Kitchen:** 18 degrees
- Bathroom:** 21 - 24 degrees
- Children's bedroom,
Study:** 20 - 21 degrees



8 | Tips on saving energy

On your radiators, you will find a knob that you can turn (thermostat). This knob indicates the temperature that you want your home to be heated to.

Level 1 = 12 degrees

Level 2 = approx. 16 degrees

Level 3 = 20 degrees

Level 4 = 24 degrees

Level 5 = approx. 28 degrees

If you set the knob on level 3 in the living room and on 2.5 in the bedroom, you should achieve the perfect room temperature. Your home won't heat up faster if you set the radiators on a higher level – all this will do is increase your bills!

Some homes have radiators that use electricity. These radiators are particularly expensive to run. You can recognise these kind of radiators by the electricity cable. Please get advice if you have this kind of heating.

If you are not going to be at home, you can turn down your radiators to 2.



Important: Never turn the radiators down to 0 in winter!

❖ Do not put items of furniture up against your radiators or hang curtains in front of them!

❖ Do not hang items of clothing on the radiators!



WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO VENTILATE MY HOME?

Fresh air is a good thing! We can also prevent mould from forming if we air our homes properly. This is especially important in winter.

- ❖ **Open the window fully at least 3 times a day. The window should stay open for 5 - 10 minutes. If you only open the window by tilting it, you will need to air the room for longer, and this will increase your electricity consumption.**
- ❖ **Air rooms after cooking.**
- ❖ **Air rooms when you are drying washing in the home. In rented properties, you are sometimes not allowed to dry washing inside. This will be stipulated in your tenancy agreement!**

WASHING & DRYING

When you do your washing, pay careful consideration to the temperature you use. With laundry that has a normal level of soiling, a temperature of 30 degrees will be sufficient. If you wash your clothes at 30 degrees, you will save money. The hotter the wash, the more expensive it will be!

The best way to dry your washing is on the washing line or on a drying rack. But if you don't want to stop using your tumble dryer, then be sure to spin your washing before drying it. When you spin your washing, set the washing machine at 1,200 revolutions.



10 | Tips on saving energy

COOLING AND FREEZING FOOD

Make sure that you only open your fridge or freezer for a brief period of time. Let foods cool down before you put them in the fridge. Please don't put your fridge or freezer next to a radiator or oven. Make sure that no thick layers of ice build up in your freezer.

What are the best settings to use for my fridge/freezer?

❖ **Your fridge should be set at approx. 7 degrees. This is equivalent to approx. level 2 or 3.**

❖ **Your freezer should be set at approx. -18 degrees. Be sure that you remember to defrost it regularly. A layer of ice measuring just half a centimetre will increase your electricity consumption.**

You can measure the temperature in both with a thermometer!

COOKING AND BAKING



❖ **Use a lid on your pans when you are cooking.**

❖ **Boil water beforehand in the kettle.**

! **Important: Your oven is not a radiator. Please do not use it to heat your home!**

HOT WATER

Hot water is expensive as it requires energy to heat it up!

- …❖ Take showers rather than baths!
- …❖ Only shower for a maximum of 5 minutes!
- …❖ Wash your dishes in the sink, don't leave the water running!



LIGHTING, COMPUTERS, TV



- …❖ Buy LED light bulbs!
- …❖ Switch off the light when you leave the room!
- …❖ Don't leave your devices on standby mode! This means that, if your multi-socket extension board doesn't have an on/off switch, you should unplug the cable at the wall. Because devices use electricity even when they are on standby mode.

12 | Tips on saving energy

If you are planning to buy a new electrical device, be sure to look at the energy class of the device. A new rating system was introduced in March 2021!



SAVING ENERGY IN A RENTED PROPERTY

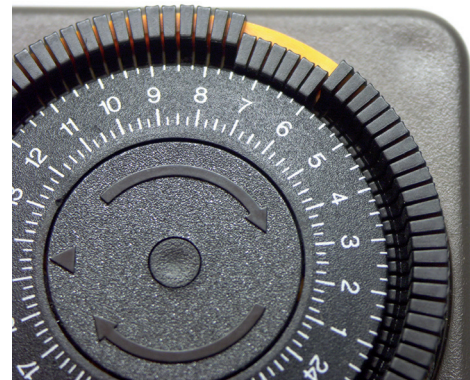


If you live in a rented property, it is not usually possible for you to renovate the property to bring down your heating and hot water costs. Yet even as a tenant, there are plenty of small things you can change to bring down your energy bills:

…❖ If you have sufficient space between your radiators and the wall, you can seal up the space with so-called "insulation panels". The boards need to be stuck down well to prevent gaps from forming. Please speak to your landlord before installing them!

…❖ Seal your windows and doors with sealing strips or brush strips.

Use timer switches. These will switch off your devices automatically, without you having to think about it.



THREAT OF DISCONNECTION – WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Under what circumstances is your supplier allowed to disconnect your electricity?

If you do not keep up with your monthly payments or fail to pay the arrears due from your annual statement, you will be sent a reminder. If you do not respond to this and the outstanding amount is € 100 or more, then your energy supplier will threaten to disconnect your supply, but will at the same time offer you the option of paying back your energy debt in instalments. In addition to this, eight working days before the planned disconnection date, you will also receive a further written announcement.



- ⚡ **You have failed to pay € 100 or more.**
- ⚡ **You have been threatened with disconnection with a four week notice period.**
- ⚠ **Important note: There are charges for disconnection and reconnection!**
- ⚡ **Eight days before the planned date, you received a letter to say that you are going to be disconnected.**
- ⚡ **You have not yet responded to your supplier's offer of an arrangement to avoid disconnection or made a suggestion as to how you will pay them.**

The following options are open to you if you want to avoid being disconnected:

- 1 Adjust your regular payments in advance:** If you know that you will be using more energy, then adjust your payments as soon as possible. This will prevent you from accruing a high level of arrears in your end-of-year statement. Your supplier will be happy to help you determine a suitable monthly payment.
- 2 Make use of options to help yourself:** Be proactive and respond to the letter from your supplier. Can you pay off the amount due from your savings?
- 3 Get in touch with your energy supplier:** If you are threatened with disconnection, your supplier is legally obliged to offer you an arrangement to avoid disconnection! This will give you the option of paying off your energy debt in instalments over a period of 6 to 18 months.

- 4 Apply for a loan:** You also have the option of applying for a loan from the social security authorities. You can find out more about this option in the section entitled "Loans to pay off energy debts"
- 5 Make use of the advice available:** If you need further help, contact an advice centre. You can find details of these in "Where can I get further advice".



i YOUR ELECTRICITY SUPPLY HAS BEEN DISCONNECTED AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO?

The first step is to call your energy supplier. Explain your current financial situation and ask them what the options are for reconnection. If you are not able to pay off your energy debts, find out whether you are eligible for an energy loan from the Jobcenter or the Social Security Office. If you need further help or advice, there are various advice centres in the Tübingen district that can help.

You will find further information and contact details on this website: www.kreis-tuebingen.de/energieschulden



LOANS TO PAY OFF ENERGY DEBTS



If you are being threatened with disconnection on account of an energy debt, you can apply for a loan from the Jobcenter or the Social Security Office. The prerequisites for these loans are:


- ❖ **You do not have any financial means that you could draw on.**
- ❖ **The arrangement with the energy supplier to avoid disconnection has failed.**
- ❖ **There are no other options available to you to prevent your supply from being disconnected.**




Important note: People who are in employment can also apply for a loan from the Social Security Office. The decision as to whether you will be granted a loan will depend on the specific details of your individual case. The Jobcenter/Social Security Office are not obliged to grant you a loan.

WHERE CAN I APPLY FOR A LOAN?


If you are currently receiving benefits from the Tübingen Jobcenter:

 **Jobcenter Tübingen**
Schleifmühlenweg 68
72070 Tübingen
Tel.: **07071 56520**

If you live **in Tübingen itself** and are **not** receiving benefits from the Jobcenter:


 **Tübingen city authorities - Social Assistance**
Derendinger Strasse 50
72072 Tübingen
Tel.: **07071 204-1850**

If you live within the wider **Tübingen administrative district** and are **not** receiving benefits from the Jobcenter:


 **Tübingen district administration offices -
Department for Social Welfare**
Wilhelm-Keil-Strasse 50
72072 Tübingen
Tel.: **07071 207-2002**



WHERE CAN I GET FURTHER ADVICE?

 **Advice on social welfare issues from the Tübingen Diakonische Werk**
 Diakonie Tübingen
 Hechinger Strasse 13
 72072 Tübingen
 Tel.: **07071 9304-70**

Here you can get help with applying for social security benefits if you find yourself in an emergency situation in social or material terms.

 **Advice on social welfare issues from Caritas - Schwarzwald-Gäu region**
 Caritas Centre Tübingen
 Hechinger Strasse 43
 72072 Tübingen
 Tel.: **07071 7962-0 (appointments also available in Rottenburg)**

For general advice on social welfare issues and a good point of contact for all kinds of social problems, regardless of your age, nationality or religious confession.

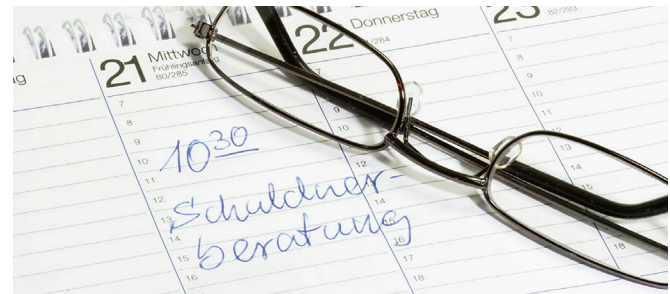
Debt counselling in the Tübingen administrative district

Debt counselling - Tübingen
 Villa Metz - Hechinger Strasse 13
 72072 Tübingen
 Tel.: **07071 9304-871**

You can get help here if you have problems with debts. The debt counsellors will give you advice on financial issues and help you to solve your money problems.

The phones are manned during the following hours:
 Monday – Thursday: 09:00 am – 11:00 am

You can arrange an appointment during these hours!



Here you will find a "humidity card". You can use this card to establish the level of humidity in your home. It will help you to decide how often you need to air your home. There is also a thermometer on the card which you can use to measure the room temperature.



IMPRINT

Publisher
Verbraucherzentrale
Baden-Württemberg e.V.
Energy Advice Team
Paulinenstraße 47
70178 Stuttgart

Version: March 2022
Printed on 100 %
recycled paper

© Verbraucherzentrale
Baden-Württemberg e.V.

Photos/ picture credits:

© Bildagentur PantherMedia: serggn, Titel | Ralf Kalytta, S. 2 und S. 15 | Volker Riechert, S. 8 | Sandralise (YAYMicro), S. 9 | toa55 (YAYMicro), S.10 | gualtiero boffi, S. 11 | Rupert Trischberger, S. 11 | gemena-com (YAYMicro), S. 12 | Andriy Popov (123rf.com), S. 12 | Frank-Peter Funke S. 13 | Chris Schäfer, S. 14 | Mila Markovic78 (YAYMicro) S. 16 | Birgit Reitz-Hofmann, S.19 | ChiccoDodiFC, S. 17 | © g-stockstudio (shutterstock.com), S.18 | © Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband e.V.: S.6 und S.20 | Tatiana Gladskikh (shutterstock.com), S.7

The project "Energy Advice for Low-Income Households" is funded by the Ministry for the Environment of Baden-Württemberg from state funds that were agreed upon by the Baden-Württemberg Landtag.

Funded by:



**Federal Ministry
for Economic Affairs
and Climate
Protection**

**on the basis of a resolution
of the German Bundestag**



Baden-Württemberg
MINISTRY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT,
CLIMATE AND THE ENERGY SECTOR

verbraucherzentrale

Baden-Württemberg