

April 1, 2020

Electricity demand during COVID-19

BC Hydro is committed to delivering safe, reliable electricity to its customers during the COVID-19 pandemic and is continuing to monitor changes in provincial electricity demand.

Residential electricity demand

BC Hydro data shows residential electricity consumption in the last two weeks of March was approximately 9 per cent higher compared to same time last year, 1 per cent higher than 2018 and nearly 2 per cent lower than 2017.

With more British Columbians spending more time at home and working from home, there has been a shift in electricity demand throughout the day to align with changes in daily habits. Changes to daily demand patterns on weekdays for customers in non-electrically heated residences include:

- an electricity use peak later in the morning;
- a drop off in demand in the afternoon; and,
- an earlier evening peak for energy consumption.

Commercial electricity demand

BC Hydro data shows commercial electricity consumption in the last two weeks of March is approximately 4 per cent lower compared to same time last year, and 9 per cent lower than in both 2017 and 2018.

BC Hydro has seen a decrease in electricity consumption for commercial customers for the week of March 23 to 27, when compared to the week of March 9 to 13 before businesses began to close or reduce hours, specific decreases within the commercial sector include:

- restaurants were down by 31 per cent;
- hotels were down by 24 per cent; and,
- offices were down by 15 per cent.

British Columbia is fortunate to have a large, clean hydroelectric system that can respond quickly to changes in electricity demand.