



Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

Dear XXXXX,

I am following up on a conversation you had with staff from [EIA Contractor], a research company we've asked to help you complete the Energy Supplier Survey portion of the Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS), EIA Form 457. The RECS is conducted just once every four years. It also provides the only public, statistically reliable source of home energy consumption data for the U.S., regions and States.

Your company's response to the RECS Form 457 is required under Public Law 93-275 (Federal Energy Administration Act of 1974), and we have taken several steps to reduce the effort required. We now offer electronic reporting and receipt. [ESS Contractor] will also provide any technical support you may need.

To begin the RECS Form 457, use the secure website below to view the selected customer service addresses, read instructions, and submit data. The website also contains information about confidentiality and security measures taken by [ESS Contractor] and EIA to ensure no personally identifiable information is released to the public. The website, your unique user ID, and password are as follows:

Website: www.recs2009ess.org

ID: xxxxx

Password: xxxxx

Specialists from [ESS Contractor] stand ready to assist you on the RECS Hotline at 877-XXX-XXXX. You may also contact EIA directly by calling or e-mailing Chip Berry, the RECS Survey Manager, at (202) 586-5543 or james.berry@eia.gov.

We surveyed 8,000 U.S. homes in 2015 to obtain energy characteristics information. Some of the occupants at the addresses we visited named your company as an energy supplier. The billing or delivery data we ask you to report is for these addresses.

Your participation is vital to the continued success of this program. Thank you again and we greatly appreciate your support for this study.

Sincerely,

Tom Leckey, Director
Office of Consumption and Efficiency Statistics
Energy Information Administration, U.S. Department of Energy

2015 RECS Energy Supplier Survey FAQ

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General Questions

1. [What is the Residential Energy Consumption Survey \(RECS\)?](#) The RECS is a survey that collects energy-related information from a national sample of U.S. households. The RECS is conducted in two phases. During the first phase, a random sample of homes is selected and interviews are conducted with householders to collect information on the energy characteristics of U.S. homes. The second phase, the Energy Supplier Survey (ESS), collects billing data for the homes visited in the initial phase of RECS. Each cycle, data is collected from hundreds of suppliers across the nation. The information collected is used to publish comprehensive, aggregate statistics on residential energy usage.
2. [How often is the RECS-ESS conducted?](#) The RECS is conducted every 4 years. The 2015 RECS is the 13th round of the survey.

3. [Who is conducting the RECS-ESS?](#) The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) of the U.S. Department of Energy sponsors the RECS-ESS survey. EIA has contracted with [EIA Contractor] to collect the supplier billing data.
4. [Who is Westat?](#) Westat is a survey research organization contracted by the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) to collect the 2015 RECS-ESS data. [EIA Contractor] is a renowned survey research company with over 40 years of experience collecting data for government agencies. [EIA Contractor] can be contacted at xxx-xxx-xxxx.
5. [How will the data I provide be used?](#) The data your company provides are used to publish aggregate statistics on residential energy usage in the U.S. Data on individual housing units or any identifiable information will absolutely not be published or given to any other parties. The aggregated data are used by governments at all levels, utilities, nongovernmental organizations, product manufacturers, and home builders to plan energy policy, set standards, and analyze trends in energy markets. Information about the survey and the most recent RECS data are available [here](#).
6. [Why are data being requested for only these service addresses?](#) EIA surveyed over 8,000 U.S. homes in 2015 to obtain energy characteristics information. An occupant at the addresses we visited named your company as an energy supplier. The billing or delivery data we ask you to report is for these addresses.

Data Security and Confidentiality

7. [How can I be sure that the data will be kept confidential?](#) The information you provide on Form EIA-457 will be used for statistical purposes only and is confidential by law. In accordance with the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act of 2002 and other applicable Federal laws, your responses will not be disclosed in identifiable form without your consent. Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, Federal information systems are protected from malicious activities through cybersecurity screening of transmitted data. Every EIA employee, as well as every agent, is subject to a jail term, a fine, or both if he or she makes public ANY identifiable information you reported
8. [Is this a secure website?](#) Yes. [EIA Contractor] operates a computer facility dedicated to confidentiality and data protection. Their general support system (GSS) hosts more than 1000 projects for various organizations and has undergone security audits by a variety of federal agencies. [EIA Contractor] has received the authority to operate (ATO) as a result. The 2015 RECS Energy Supplier Survey will be hosted in the same environment with the same protections as other surveys. Your file download, upload and data entry will be encrypted and transmitted to and from [EIA Contractor] web servers through the use of Secure Socket Layer (SSL) technology. This proven security protocol is widely used to support e-commerce transactions, server account authentication and data encryption.
9. [How do I know this is a legitimate government survey?](#) All U.S. Government surveys are required to be reviewed by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). An OMB approved survey will have a valid OMB number and expiration date on the data collection form. The OMB number for this survey is 1905-0092. The form number is EIA-457D-G.

Reporting Data

10. [What items do I report?](#) The RECS-ESS forms request energy *consumption* amounts and customer *costs* for a 20 month period from September 2014 to April 2016. This includes:

Electricity: Billing End Date, Amount of Fuel Used, method used to obtain each reading, Total Cost, and whether the cost includes bundled (sold and delivered) service, sold only or delivered only.

Natural Gas: Billing End Date, Unit of Measure, Amount of Fuel Used, method used to obtain each reading, Total Cost, and whether the cost includes bundled (sold and delivered) service, sold only or delivered only.

Fuel Oil/Kerosene: Date of Delivery, Type of Fuel Sold, Quantity of Fuel Delivered in Gallons, Price per Gallon, Customer Tank Capacity, Source of Delivery Data, and information about customers who move.

LPG: Date of Delivery, Type of Fuel Sold, Unit of Measure, Quantity of Fuel Delivered, Price per Unit, Customer Tank Capacity, Source of Delivery Data, and information about customers who move. Refer to the Instructions for each form before submitting data.

11. [Should I provide Budgeted Payment amounts or Actual costs?](#) Always include the Actual Cost to the customer. Do not provide budgeted or "level" payment plan amounts.
12. [What types of costs should be included in the total costs to the customer?](#) *Include* in the Total Costs all state and local taxes, commodity charges, delivery charges, demand charges, handling fees, fuel adjustment charges and system charges (minimum bill or base charge). *Exclude* merchandise, repairs, and service charges.
13. [What should I report if different customers lived at the same address in the 20 month period between September 2014 and April 2016?](#) We are requesting data for the service address not the customer. Therefore, report as much data as you can *only for the address listed*. Do not report data for the same customer at a different address from the service address we provided.
14. [What if a service address provided by EIA is not found in my company's records?](#) Contact [EIA Contractor] at xxx-xxx-xxxx if you are provided an address that is not in your service area or available in your company's current or archived records.
15. [If I want to submit data by uploading a file, do I have to use the Excel template provided?](#) We recommend that you use the Excel template we provide or something very similar; this allows our staff to easily process the data you submit. However, other formats such as SAS or Access are permissible *as long as* you provide a file layout and include all variables from the template on the file. You may contact the [EIA Contractor] staff at xxx-xxx-xxxx if you have any questions or need help submitting a file.
16. [How do I submit data if I do not want to use this Website?](#) You may download the forms and mail them in OR contact [EIA Contractor] at xxx-xxx-xxxx and request that the forms be mailed to you.