

TECH Contractor Knowledge Base

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Demand Response Requirements

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Answer

Demand Response Requirements - SF HPWH and HP HVAC

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What is Demand Response?

Demand response (DR) programs incentivize customers to reduce electricity use during peak hours to help make California's electrical grid cleaner, safer, and more reliable. There are different types of demand response programs that offer a various ways to participate. The most common demand response program choice for TECH customers, OhmConnect, encourages customers participate by voluntarily reducing their electricity use when called upon via text or email. Other programs allow for automated participation by connecting a home appliance, such as a smart thermostat or smart plug, to the program. Most programs offer some level of incentive, reward, or compensation for participating.

Demand response programs typically do not connect to water heaters, and instead help customers optimize other various electricity uses in a household. **Please note: the demand response enrollment requirement is different from the water heater rewards program enrollment requirement.**

Learn more about the what, why, and how of demand response at this [TECH demand response webpage \(https://www.switchison.org/techcleanca/demand-response\)](https://www.switchison.org/techcleanca/demand-response), which also includes common FAQ and can be shared directly with your customers. See the [HPWH Enrollment & Scheduling Requirements Visual \(https://frontierenergy-tech.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#5f000003GyZS/a/RO000003NTdt/BC.ixeylq8LJJbOlo10MF48GMCKDGErSaL8TsvJzcoY\)](https://frontierenergy-tech.my.site.com/contractorsupport/s/article/SF-Heat-Pump-Water-Heater-Project-Checklist#enrollment-scheduling-visual) for guidance on when demand response enrollment should be initiated with respect to the HPWH project process as a whole.

TECH Customer Enrollment Requirement

Single family customers who wish to benefit from TECH incentives must agree to enroll in a qualifying demand response program for three years following the installation of their new heat pump HVAC or heat pump water heater (HPWH) if a qualifying program is available to them.

Customers must acknowledge the demand response enrollment requirement when completing the [TECH Customer Terms and Conditions \(T&Cs\) \(https://frontierenergy-tech.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#5f000003GyZS/a/RO0000004ezl/RxuGQeD8nWiu.lsHvZn7AKzg36JFJcPElw_kDFxoQ\)](https://frontierenergy-tech.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#5f000003GyZS/a/RO0000004ezl/RxuGQeD8nWiu.lsHvZn7AKzg36JFJcPElw_kDFxoQ) prior to the start of their new heat pump installation.

Customers must self-enroll in the qualifying demand response program of their choice. A list of qualifying demand response programs can be found at [Demand response | The Switch Is On](https://www.switchison.org/techcleanca/demand-response) (<https://www.switchison.org/techcleanca/demand-response>). The program team encourages contractors to facilitate the customer's demand response program enrollment soon after the sales call or equipment installation, since proof of enrollment must be provided within the incentive claim.

Customer DR Requirements by Electric Utility

Demand response enrollment is required for HPWH and HVAC projects, where available. Availability is based on electric utility:

Customer Electric Provider	Demand Response Available and Required?
PG&E	Yes
SCE	Yes
SDG&E	Yes
SMUD	Yes, if eligible*
Other Publicly Owned Utility (POU)	No, but recommended if programs are available in the region.

***SMUD Demand Response Requirement**

- Most SMUD customers are eligible to enroll in SMUD's smart thermostat demand response, My Energy Optimizer, and must do so to receive TECH incentives. Those who are not able to enroll in My Energy Optimizer (because of no central AC, variable stage AC, no Wi-Fi, or no compatible thermostat) are exempt from the demand response enrollment requirement and can still receive TECH incentives. Please see the <https://frontierenergy-tech.my.site.com/contractorsupport/s/article/SF-Heat-Pump-Water-Heater-Project-Checklist#smud-process-flow>. [SMUD Demand Response Eligibility Visual](https://frontierenergy-tech.file.force.com/sfc/dist/version/renditionDownload?rendition=ORIGINAL_Png&versionId=068RO00000P40WB&operationContext=DELIVERY&contentId=05TRO00000UmbrP&page=0&d=%2Fa%2FRO000002irXJ%2FTmBmJ1vO0uc1xPJaNlpKLIV4v...y.l6iQ14ThgtGw&oid=00D5f000003GyZS&dpt=null&viewId=...) (https://frontierenergy-tech.file.force.com/sfc/dist/version/renditionDownload?rendition=ORIGINAL_Png&versionId=068RO00000P40WB&operationContext=DELIVERY&contentId=05TRO00000UmbrP&page=0&d=%2Fa%2FRO000002irXJ%2FTmBmJ1vO0uc1xPJaNlpKLIV4v...y.l6iQ14ThgtGw&oid=00D5f000003GyZS&dpt=null&viewId=...) for more eligibility guidance.

- **For HPWH projects only**, we are not asking contractors to install a smart thermostat in order to make the customer eligible.
- Variable stage systems are not compatible with the SMUD demand response programs, so customers with these systems are exempt from the requirement. However, new 2-stage ducted HP HVAC systems are likely compatible with third-party thermostats. **TECH HP HVAC Contractors are encouraged to install a smart thermostat** to help customers to enjoy more functionalities of their new HVAC system. As long as a smart thermostat is installed, the contractor is expected to help the customer enroll in My Energy Optimizer.
- You may identify demand response enrollment exemptions for your customers served by SMUD when you are completing the incentive claim form.

SMUD DR Eligibility Requirement: SMUD customers must enroll in a demand response program in order to receive TECH HPWH incentives. However, unlike in the electric IOU territories, there are no demand response programs that are open to 100% of SMUD customers. If a customer is not about to enroll in My Energy Optimizer, SMUD's demand response program option, they may still receive an incentive, based on the flow chart below.

Contractor Role and Requirements

Customers will likely be unfamiliar with the concept and value of demand response programs. As a participating contractor, you should review all contents of Demand response | The Switch Is On (<https://www.switchison.org/techcleanca/demand-response>) to familiarize yourself with the benefits of demand response and the programs available to customers within your service area.

You will be responsible for providing the following types of support for your customers:

- **Education:** Provide clear explanations to customers about demand response benefits and use cases. Point them to the website linked above, and/or share the HVAC (https://frontierenergy-tech.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#5f000003GyZS/a/RO00000162Y1/8lt8J7RrLyv2IWtDvaWCKwzxlQhW_b5iesnb3t473A) or HPWH (<https://frontierenergy-tech.my.salesforce.com/sfc/p/#5f000003GyZS/a/RO000000rZPR/jFuWjBQniGmJDYyW61rYH1zXvHT2mHqcUbQI77EbNjA>) customer-facing demand response flyer (these flyers will be updated by 7/21/25).
 - For more contractor and customer resources, see the “Demand Response, TOU, and Water Heater Rewards Resources” section of the Heat Pump Water Heater Incentives - Single Family (<https://frontierenergy-tech.my.site.com/contractorsupport/s/article/Heat-Pump-Water-Heater-Incentives-Single-Family>).
- **Enrollment:** Offer demand response program enrollment assistance and collect proof of enrollment. Contractors are encouraged to recommend the program(s) best suited to the needs of their customers and to provide follow-up support and resources after the house call.
- **T&Cs Validation:** Confirm that your customers have fully completed all required sections of the Customer Agreement to TECH Program Terms and Conditions (T&Cs) (<https://frontierenergy-tech.my.site.com/contractorsupport/s/article/Contractor-Invoice-Customer-Agreement>). Failure to



acknowledge the demand response requirements outlined in the T&Cs will result in claims correction requests and the need to go back to the customer.

- **Documentation (HPWH projects only):** Collect proof of demand response enrollment to submit with the incentive claim. The image must include customer's name or email. Examples of acceptable documentation are provided in the [last section of this article](#).
- **Troubleshooting:** Please refer to [Troubleshooting Demand Response Enrollment section](#).

Customers who have received a Rheem HPWH will have the option to enroll the new unit in OhmConnect via the Rheem EcoNet app. These customers should NOT do so. The EcoNet app allows for enrollment in only one external program. Customers using the EcoNet app should reserve that enrollment for a qualifying [Water Heater Rewards \(https://frontierenergy-tech.my.site.com/contractorsupport/s/article/Heat-Pump-Water-Heater-Rewards\)](https://frontierenergy-tech.my.site.com/contractorsupport/s/article/Heat-Pump-Water-Heater-Rewards) program (i.e. WatterSaver, SmartShift Rewards, or Smart Home Flex). As the contractor, you should help the customer set up their EcoNet app, and make sure that they do not connect it to OhmConnect.

These customers must still satisfy the demand response enrollment requirement. If they choose OhmConnect, they should enroll directly on [this OhmConnect website \(https://partners.ohmconnect.com/ca-water-heater-rebate/?campaign=es_tech_homes\)](https://partners.ohmconnect.com/ca-water-heater-rebate/?campaign=es_tech_homes) rather than through the EcoNet app, and should not connect their Rheem if presented with the option to do so.

Important Note for Installers of Rheem HPWHs

Customers who have received a Rheem HPWH will have the option to enroll the new unit in OhmConnect via the Rheem EcoNet app. These customers should NOT do so. The EcoNet app allows for enrollment in only one external program. Customers using the EcoNet app should reserve that enrollment for a qualifying [Water Heater Rewards \(https://frontierenergy-tech.my.site.com/contractorsupport/s/article/Heat-Pump-Water-Heater-Rewards\)](https://frontierenergy-tech.my.site.com/contractorsupport/s/article/Heat-Pump-Water-Heater-Rewards) program (i.e. WatterSaver, SmartShift Rewards, or Smart Home Flex). As the contractor, you should help the customer set up their EcoNet app, and make sure that they do not connect it to OhmConnect.

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Contractors' Recommendations for Successful Demand Response Enrollment!



Many contractors have shared tips for success with the demand response enrollment requirement, which we've summarized below. Thank you to contractors who provided this feedback!

Process:

- Introduce the requirement early on.
- Recommend one particular demand response program.
- Send explanation email to customers with simple steps and links.
- Help the customer enroll while onsite.
- Reminder emails/phone calls.

Communications with customer:

- Enroll in demand response yourself so that you can share positive personal experiences with it.
- Emphasize benefits - energy conservation, rewards for participating, helps prevent brownouts/blackouts.
- Understand demand response and be prepared to answer questions. Perhaps have a dedicated person for these conversations.
- Remind customers that it is a mandatory step for receiving a large incentive.
- Clarify that the demand response program won't be controlling their water heater (*unless they specifically connect their Rheem to OhmConnect, which they should not do*).

Troubleshooting Demand Response Enrollment

Please refer to the troubleshooting guidance in this section and reach out to your account manager for additional help. Contractors applying for an incentive may, in rare cases, request an exemption from the requirement to upload proof of DR enrollment. However, the expectation is that you help the customer troubleshoot their enrollment, and you'll need to describe your efforts if you request an exemption. Based on contractor experience so far, it is rare that customers' enrollment issues cannot be solved after a reasonable amount of troubleshooting. Please use your exception requests wisely.

Please review the troubleshooting guidance in this section and reach out to TECH.contractor@energy-solution.com (mailto:TECH.contractor@energy-solution.com) for additional help.

• Enrollment Conflict

- If the customer tries to enroll in a qualified demand response program but gets a message that they are already enrolled in a different demand response program (OhmConnect may call it a conflicting "Energy Savings Program"), please take a screenshot of that message and upload it to the claim form.

• Trouble linking utility account to OhmConnect:

- In the rare case that the customer does not have an email address, you should create a placeholder email to complete the sign up, as long as the customer has a cell phone. Once they are signed up, they can receive OhmHour notifications over text, and the email is no longer needed.
- Review the customer's electricity bill to ensure the customer is using the correct utility account number.
- Have the customer try various phone numbers that could be possibly connected with the account – for example phone numbers of family members, or old disconnected phone numbers.
- If a customer has an online utility account, they should complete the utility connection with their account login information. If they can't remember their login, you should have them reset their password.
- For customers without an online account, have them create an online utility account – this is a quick process, the customer just needs their account number (found on their bill) and the phone number associated with their account.
- When there are issues with creating an online account, be sure to:
- **Other OhmConnect enrollment issues:**
 - Have the customer contact Help@ohmconnect.com (<mailto:Help@ohmconnect.com>).
 - If there is an error message during the OhmConnect enrollment process, please take a screenshot, send it to us at TECH.contractor@energy-solution.com (<mailto:TECH.contractor@energy-solution.com>).

Acceptable Images for Proof of Demand Response Enrollment

Contractors pursuing HPWH incentives on behalf of their customers must include proof of qualifying demand response program enrollment when submitting incentive applications. Proof of enrollment must always include the customer's name or email address (either in message from program or visible in the forwarded email header information from the customer), and it must be evident that all steps of the enrollment process have been completed. For OhmConnect, that means the customer needs to have successfully connected their utility account.

Some examples are provided below, though these are not inclusive of all demand response enrollment options. Reach out to TECH.contractor@energy-solution.com (<mailto:TECH.contractor@energy-solution.com>) with any questions about capturing valid proof of demand response enrollment.



OhmConnect



Your utility is linked!



Thanks for linking your utility account, Alexis.

Once PG&E confirms your eligibility – which can take a couple days – we'll start helping you save money and energy. We'll also send you your FREE sun shelter.

In the meantime, explore the OhmConnect dashboard and get ready for your first energy-saving event!

[View my Dashboard](#)

Congratulations Carl!

You've successfully linked your SCE account to OhmConnect. We're here to help you save energy and money!

To save the most on your bill, you'll want to save electricity when it's most expensive. Between the hours of 4PM and 9PM is when electricity can be twice as costly, so saving energy for one hour during that time is more effective than saving for two hours in the morning.

To keep you on track, we send you notifications for what we call "OhmHours." These energy-saving events are your chance to maximize your savings on your electric bill.


We'll also reward you with cash and gift cards for saving during this time.




From: OhmConnect <hello@ohmconnect.com>
Date: Thu, Dec 12, 2024 at 4:35PM
Subject: OhmHour Friday, 7 - 8PM
To: [redacted]@gmail.com

Your next OhmHour is

Friday, 7 - 8PM






Your next OhmHour is tomorrow, 7 - 8PM.

Over the last 10 weekdays, you've used an average of 1,396 watt-hours between the hours of 7 - 8PM—this is your forecast. Use less energy than your forecast to start earning rewards—the more you reduce the more you earn. It's that simple!

[Event Details](#)

[Learn more about how we calculate your forecast](#)

< SETTINGS



[redacted]@gmail.com [Edit](#)

David

✓ UTILITY ACCOUNT & EVENT ELIGIBILITY

Utility Status: Connected >

Events: Eligible

🔗 DEVICE CONNECTIONS >

0 Accounts, 0 Devices

⚡ ENERGY EVENTS >

Manage Alerts



SMUD My Energy Optimizer®

From: **SMUD My Energy Optimizer** <info@myenergyoptimizer.org>

Date: Thu, Jan 11, 2024 at 1:42 PM

Subject: TEST | Welcome to My Energy Optimizer

To: [REDACTED]



Welcome to My Energy Optimizer!

And welcome to \$25 in rewards, more affordable energy and a
more reliable energy system.

Thank you for enrolling in My Energy Optimizer. We've

Title

Demand Response Requirements

URL Name

<https://frontierenergy-tech.my.site.com/contractorsupport/s/article/Demand-Response-Requirements>



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