

Setting up utilities and internet

Easy • 1 to 2 hours of calls and forms, about two weeks before move-in • Often a deposit or start-up fee; varies by company and state

Find out from your lease which utilities are in your name, then start each one about two weeks before move-in so the lights work on day one. Ask every company about deposits: in many states they can only require one for set reasons, like an old unpaid bill or no credit record, and you can often pay in installments. Compare internet plans with the FCC's broadband label, and ask about Lifeline and LIHEAP if money is tight.

YOU'LL NEED

- ☐ Your lease (it says which utilities you pay)
- ☐ Your new address, including the unit number
- ☐ Your move-in date
- ☐ Photo ID, and your Social Security number if the company asks for a credit check
- ☐ A bank account or card for autopay

WHAT TO KNOW

- 1 Read the lease to see what's yours.
- 2 Ask the landlord or the last tenant which companies serve the building.
- 3 Call or sign up online about two weeks before move-in (our rule of thumb).
- 4 Expect questions about your credit.
- 5 Know when they can ask for a deposit.
- 6 Can't pay the deposit all at once?
- 7 Find out who offers internet at your address.
- 8 Compare plans with the broadband label.
- 9 Set up autopay or reminders for every bill, and write down each account number and customer service number in one place.
- 10 On move-in day, take photos of the electric, gas and water meter readings if you can reach them, and find the water shutoff and breaker panel.

Watch out Don't miss the cancel call at your old place, or you may pay for both. And be careful with anyone offering a "utility grant" for a fee: LIHEAP doesn't charge a fee for a benefit, and HHS asks you to report fee offers to its fraud hotline at 1-800-447-8477.

DAD NOTE Call the electric company before you rent the truck. Nobody wants to unpack in the dark.

Full lesson: aptkeys.com/your-place/moving-out/setting-up-utilities-and-internet/

Checked October 3, 2026. Sources: Missouri Public Service Commission; Idaho Public Utilities Commission; Federal Communications Commission; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.