

Utility Billing | Billing Procedures

Last Modified on 21/02/2024 7:40 am AEST



The instructions in this article relate to **Utility Billing**. The icon may be located on your [StrataMax Desktop](#) or found using the [StrataMax Search](#).

This article covers entering meter readings, processing bills, and printing and emailing bills. It also outlines how to enter the meter readings manually and how to export and import readings.

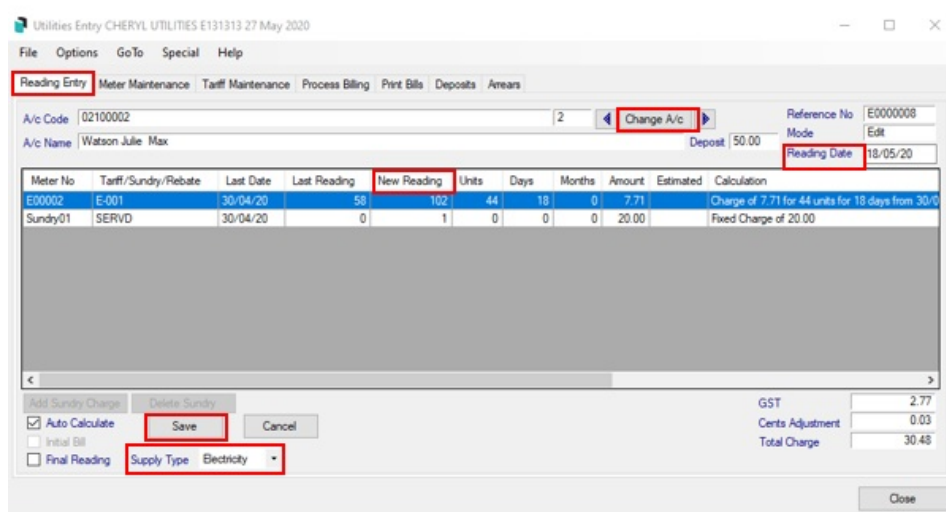
Utility Billing Video

Enter Meter Readings Manually

Cents Adjustment is enabled in *File > Configure*.

1. From the *Utility Sub-Group*, search or select the **Utility Billing** menu.
2. Select the *Reading Entry* tab, and enter the *Reading Date*.
3. Click the *Supply Type* drop-down menu to select the required *Supply Type*.
4. Click the *Change A/c* button and select a lot, then click *OK*.
5. The *Meter No*, *Tariff*, *Last Reading Date*, and *Last Reading* will be displayed for this lot.
6. Click in the *New Reading* cell and enter the new meter reading.
7. Press the *Enter* key on the keyboard and the system will automatically calculate of *Units*, *Days*, *Months* and *Amount*.
8. If there is more than one meter for the lot, enter the reading for each meter in the *New Reading* cell.
9. If the reading is an *estimation* click in the *Estimated* cell and enter 'Y', this will reflect on the bill when issued to advise the lot that the reading has been estimated.
 - The calculation field shows the breakdown of the total charges based on the tariff settings.
 - GST will be calculated on the total amount of the meter readings. Cents adjustment will be automatically deducted based on the total amount of the meter readings and the GST amount due.
 - Sundry Charges should automatically be applied to the account – see *Add Sundry Tariffs* to automatically bill for further details.

- The Total amount due will be calculated from the total of the bill, plus the GST owing and any cents rounding factored in.
10. Click Save (or press Enter).
 - This will then automatically select the next Account Code in the list.
 11. Follow the steps above to enter the meter readings for other lots.
 - Prior to processing bills, click *GoTo > Reading Record List*. Refer to relevant section below in this article, which covers the *Reading Record List*.



Export / Import Meter Reading Information

When creating the export file, the information will include all available columns: Building Number, Account Number, Lot Number, Unit Number, Name, Meter Number, Date Last Reading, Last Reading.

The base column information must include the Building Number, Meter Number, Date Last Read and Last Reading in order to be available for import.

The following section will provide information on exporting the meter info, changing the meter reading date and meter readings, and then importing the file with the new data.

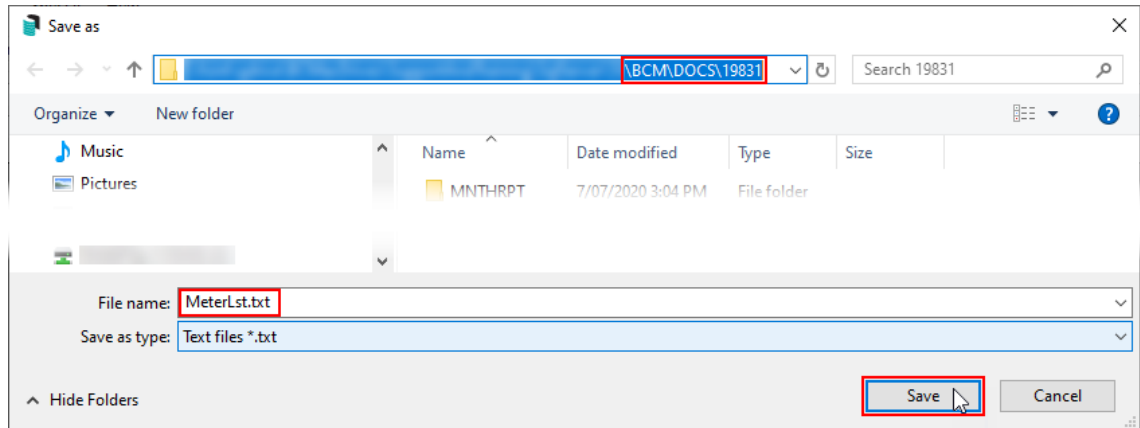
This can be useful in instances where there is a third party recording the new meter reads; in fact the export file could be provided to these sorts of parties to complete and send back to the strata manager to import into StrataMax.

For any *Utility Sub-Group* that includes more than 50 lots, this method is arguably more efficient than entering each reading manually. It should be noted that there is some formatting requirements to allow this report to export and import correctly which has been noted below.

Export Meter Readings

1. From the *Utility Sub-Group*, search or select the **Utility Billing** menu.

2. Open the the *Reading Entry* tab, and select the *Supply Type* from the drop-down list (in the bottom of the screen).
3. Select *Options > Export Meter Info*.
4. A Windows prompt will appear to save the text file 'MeterLst.txt'.
 - o The file will be saved to the StrataMax network drive `\BCM\DOCS\<EBUILDINGNUMBER>` by default.

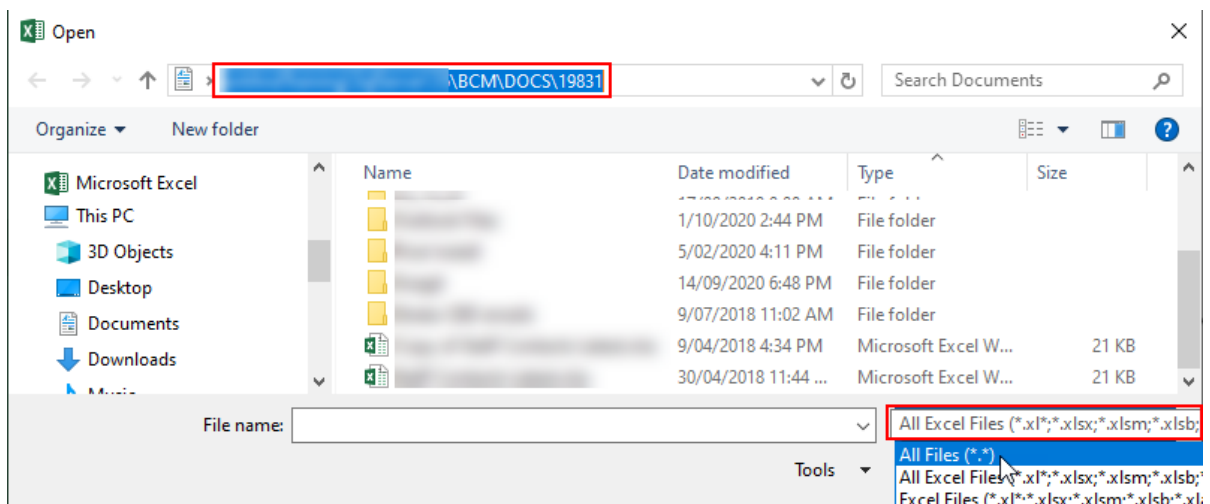


5. Proceed to the next section of this article to open the file in Excel and enter the meter readings.

Enter Meter Readings in Excel

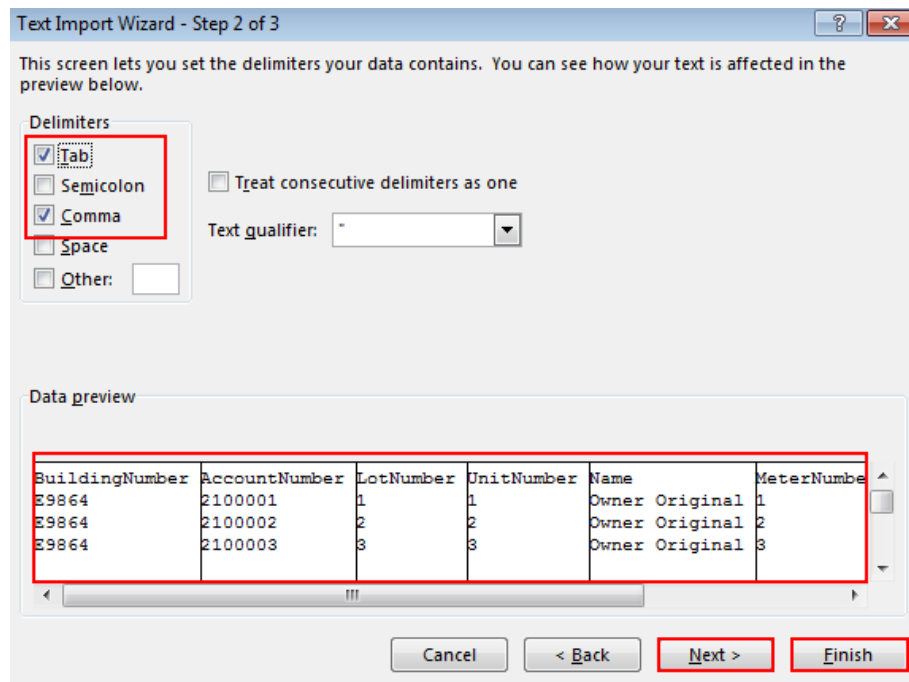
Once the file has been exported, the text file needs to be opened in *Excel* to enter the new meter readings. Some of the below steps may differ depending on the version of Excel.

1. Open Excel, and click *File > Open*.
2. Navigate to network drive, `\BCM\DOCS\<EBUILDINGNUMBER>`, where the export file was saved.
3. Change the *File Type* drop-down menu in the Excel Open File dialogue to *All Files*.



4. Select the *MeterLst.txt* file and click *Open*.
5. From the *Import Wizard*, select *Delimited* as the *Original Data Type*, then click *Next*.
6. Tick the *Comma* box as the *Delimiter*.

7. Check to ensure that the fields are separated correctly in the *Data Preview* box, then click *Next*.
8. The *Column Data Format* should be set to *Text* for all columns (*highlight all columns*)
9. Click *Finish*.



10. For each lot, change the Last Reading Date to the date of the new reading.

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	BuildingNumber	AccountNumber	LotNumber	UnitNumber	Name	MeterNumber	DateLastReading	LastReading
2	E9864	2100001	1	1	Owner Original	1	1/12/2016	1875
3	E9864	2100002	2	2	Owner Original	2	1/12/2016	7000
4	E9864	2100003	3	3	Owner Original	3	1/12/2016	2500

We recommend using the *Find and Replace* function in Excel, on the *DateLastReading* column to quickly and easily update each line item.

11. Amend the *LastReading* column information to reflect the new meter reading for each lot.
12. Once all readings are entered complete, save the file in the following directory:
 - \BCM\DATA\<EBUILDINGNUMBER_CURRENTYEAR>
 - and
 - Name the file *IMPREAD.txt* (File Type: Text (Tab Delimited)).
13. Select *Close*.

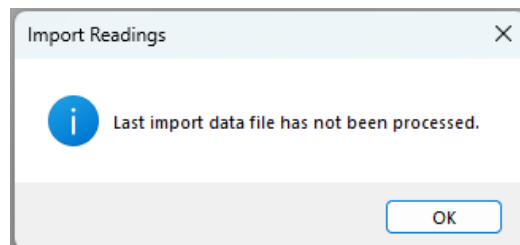
Import Meter Readings

The *Supply Type* that was used to export the meter readings needs to be used when importing them back in after making the changes in Excel. If the file contains meter readings that aren't the same *Supply Type*, the file will not import.

1. From the *Utility Sub-Group*, search or select the **Utility Billing** menu.
2. Select the *Reading Entry* tab.
3. Click the *Supply Type* drop-down menu to select the required *Supply Type*.
4. Select *Options > Import Readings*.
 - The system will attempt to find the file in the directory `\BCM\DATA\
<EBUILDINGNUMBER_CURRENTYEAR>`, and enter meter readings automatically.
 - Prior to processing bills, click *GoTo > Reading Record List*. Refer to relevant section below in this article, which covers the *Reading Record List*.

View Imported Readings

If the reading information is being imported, it has something unusual in the file and does not process as expected. This information can be viewed after the import stage and deleted where required to start the import process again. This step would be applied after trying to import the txt file and includes the below message:



1. From the *Utility Sub-Group*, search or select the **Utility Billing** menu.
2. Select *Options / View Imported Readings*. There will be a table of imported readings. Review and check that these have been processed from the Meter Maintenance tab.
3. To select all records in the table, Ctrl + A to select all records and click *Delete*.

The screenshot shows a window titled "Imported Meter Readings" with a sub-header "View Imported Readings". It contains a table with the following data:

Reading Date	AccountCode	Meter Number	Tariff	New Reading	Date Processed
22/08/23	02100001	R16W0080		1001	
22/08/23	02100002	R16W0062		581	
22/08/23	02100003	R16W0065		479	
22/08/23	02100004	R16W0075		790	
22/08/23	02100005	R16W0063		1174	
22/08/23	02100006	R16W0073		869	
22/08/23	02100007	R16W0050		1148	
22/08/23	02100008	R16W0052		636	
22/08/23	02100009	R16W0049		840	
22/08/23	02100010	R16W0068		557	
22/08/23	02100011	R16W0070		1210	
22/08/23	02100012	R16W0061		509	
22/08/23	02100013	R16W0094		661	
22/08/23	02100014	R16W0079		651	

At the bottom of the window, there are three buttons: "OK", "Delete" (highlighted with a red box), and "View Log". A status bar at the bottom right shows "1 of 83".

4. Click Yes to message: Delete selected records. Click *Confirm* to delete these readings.
5. Refer back to the current file for import and retry the [import process](#) again. Heading above.

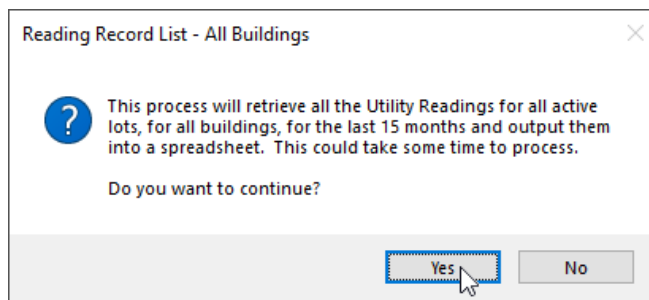
Print Reading Recording List (Local)

This is to confirm the entries made are correct (check this report against the report detailing all meter readings).

1. From the *Utility Sub-Group*, search or select the **Utility Billing** menu.
2. Select *GoTo > Reading Record List*.
3. Tag the accounts to include (Ctrl + A to select all).
4. In the *Set Limits* tab enter a *Reading Date Start* and *Reading Date Finish* (same date) to print for the period that has just been entered only.
5. Click *Proceed*, and check that the readings are correct, before processing the bills.

Print Reading Recording List (Global)

1. From the *Utility Sub-Group*, search or select the **Utility Billing** menu.
2. Select the *Options > Reading Record List – All Buildings*.
 - A prompt will appear to advise that the process "could take some time. Do you want to continue?" Click Yes.



3. Another prompt will appear, asking whether to include *Finalised Accounts (Second Debtors)*. Choose which option is required.

- Once it has finished processing, the report will be displayed in Excel, from where it can be saved, etc.

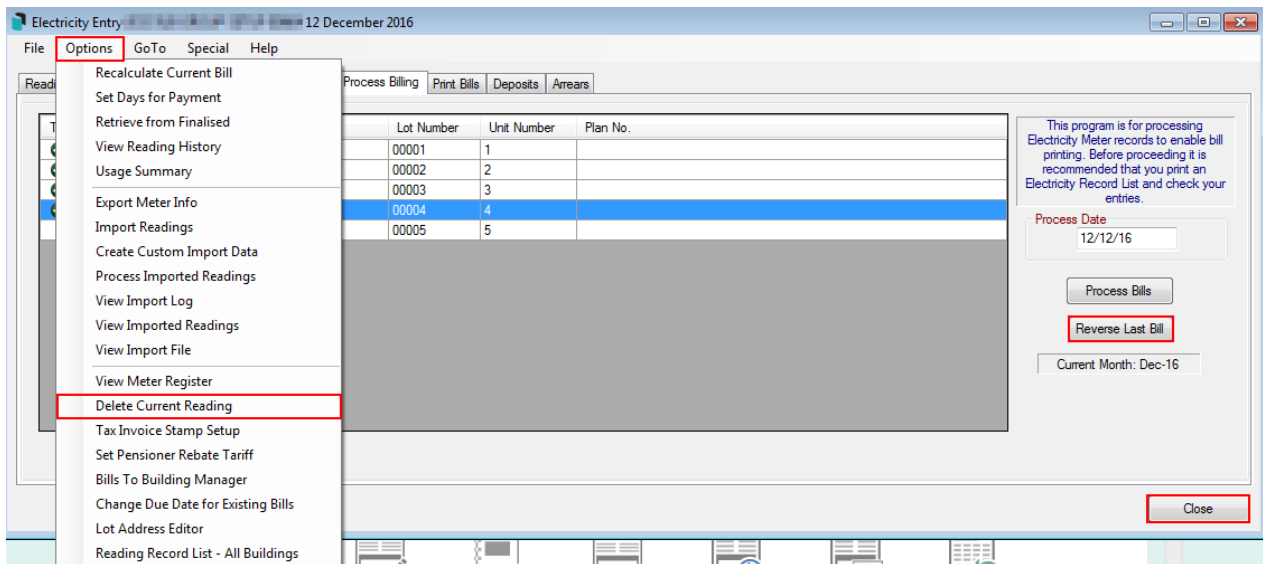
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Building Number	Building Name	Reference Number	Account Code	Account Name	Meter No	Previous Reading Date	Previous Reading
2	0504	DEBTOR ADJUSTMENT	E0000002	02100002	PETER GRIFFIN	03523	1/05/2018	52 1/08
3	0504	DEBTOR ADJUSTMENT	E0000003	02100003	JOSEPH 'JOE' SWANSON	03524	1/05/2018	37 1/08
4	0504	DEBTOR ADJUSTMENT	E0000004	02100004	PETER GRIFFIN	03525	1/05/2018	64 1/08
5	0504	DEBTOR ADJUSTMENT	E0000006	02100005	TENANT	03526	2/05/2018	55 1/08
6								

Delete Current Reading

If current readings have been entered incorrectly (e.g. a sundry charge has been omitted from the bills, or the tariff rate was incorrect) this section covers how to delete this reading.

If the current read has been processed, this will need to be reversed first before proceeding with delete.

1. From the *Utility Sub-Group*, search or select the **Utility Billing** menu.
2. Select the *Process Billing* tab and tag the lot(s) required (to tag all click *Select All* or *Ctrl + A* on the keyboard).
3. Click the *Reverse Last Bill* button.
4. Click *Options > Delete Current Readings*.
5. Select the lot accounts to delete the current reading for.
6. Make any adjustments to tariff rates, or add sundry charges etc., as necessary.
7. Re-enter the correct reads from the *Reading Entry* tab, reprint the *Reading Record List* for checking, then proceed to *Process Billing*.



Recalculate Current Bill

This section covers how to recalculate the meter readings in the event that the readings were entered, but the charge rate is incorrect. This process can only be done if the bills have not been processed either.

If the bills have already been processed, the bills will need to be reversed before proceeding with a recalculation.

1. From the *Utility Sub-Group*, search or select the **Utility Billing** menu.
2. After making the necessary changes to the tariff, sundry charge, or rebate, select the *Reading Entry* tab.
3. Select the *Reading Entry* tab, and enter the *Reading Date* from the drop-down menu in the top right.
4. Click the *Supply Type* drop-down menu to select the required *Supply Type*.
5. Click *Options > Recalculate Current Bill*.
6. Tag the required lots (Click the *Select All* button on the right if all lots need to be recalculated).
7. Click the *Recalculate* button.
 - Prior to processing bills, click *GoTo > Reading Record List*. Refer to relevant section below in this article, which covers the *Reading Record List*.

Process Utility Bills

This procedure will process the readings entered and saved for each Debtor account, and produce a Utility Bill for each Debtor

1. From the *Utility Sub-Group*, search or select the **Utility Billing** menu.
2. Select *Process Billing* tab.

3. Tag all required Debtors (to tag all click Select All or Ctrl + A on the keyboard).
4. Select Process Bills.
5. Select Close.

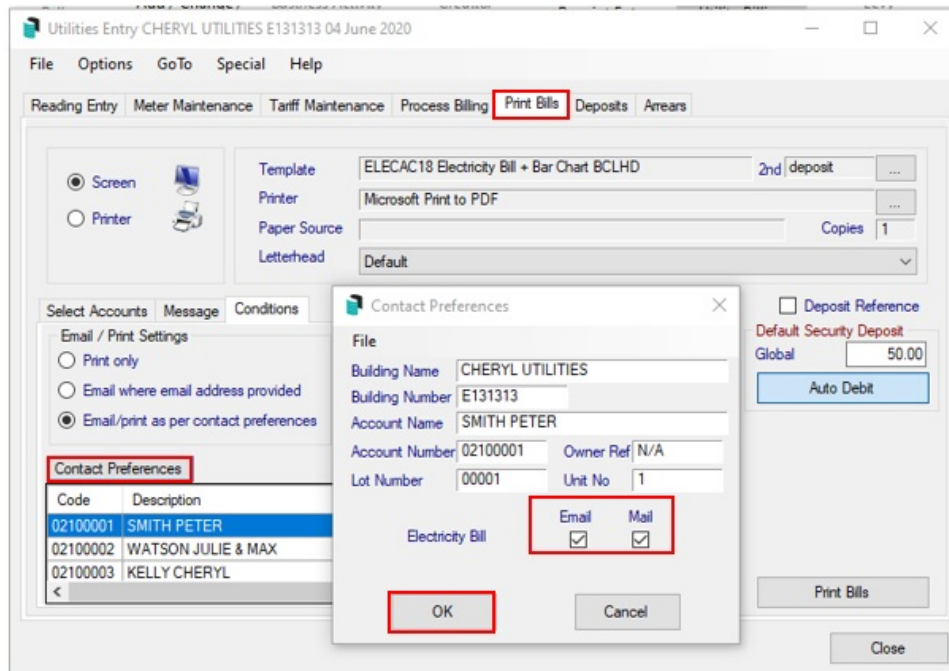
Utility Billing | Contact Preferences

Prior to printing or e-mailing the bills, the *Contact Preferences* will need to be set for each lot account. These preferences can also be set in Debtor Maintenance, at setup.

If there are multiple contacts for a Debtor account utility bills & arrears will only print to post to the first contacts address however multiple contacts can receive the bills via email if required.

If an Occupier has indicated a preference to receive bills via email, ensure the email address has been entered in Debtor Maintenance

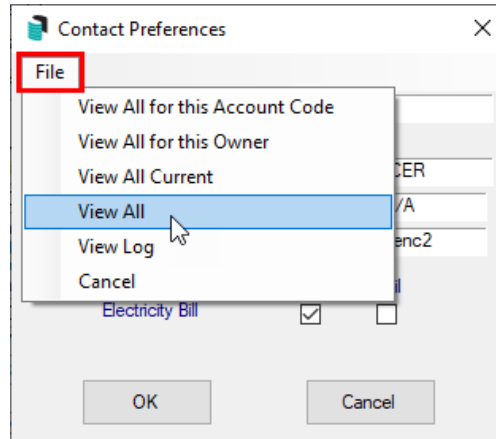
1. From the *Utility Sub-Group*, search or select **Utility Billing**.
2. Select the *Print Bills* tab, then click the *Conditions* tab in the middle section of the window.
3. Ensure you highlight a debtor with an e-mail address, then click the *Contact Preferences* button to open the 'Contact Preferences' window.
4. Set the preferred option for delivery of the bills; E-mail, Mail, or both), then click *OK*.



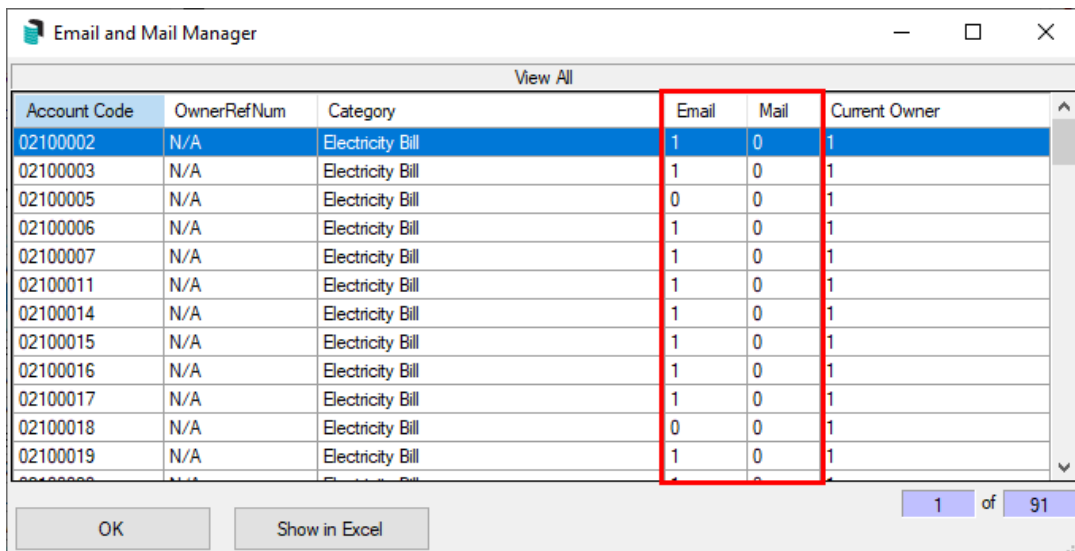
Utility Billing | Contact Preferences Report

The contact preferences for all debtors can be reported in an Excel sheet.

1. From the *Utility Sub-Group*, search or select **Utility Billing**.
2. Select the *Print Bills* tab, then click the *Conditions* tab in the middle section of the window.
3. Ensure you highlight a debtor with an e-mail address, then click the *Contact Preferences* button.
4. In the 'Contact Preferences' window, click *File > View All* to display the 'Email and Mail Manager' screen.



5. In the 'Email and Mail Manager' screen either a '1' or a '0' will be displayed for each debtor in the 'Email' or 'Mail' columns; a '1' meaning 'Yes' and a '0' meaning 'No'.



Account Code	OwnerRefNum	Category	Email	Mail	Current Owner
02100002	N/A	Electricity Bill	1	0	1
02100003	N/A	Electricity Bill	1	0	1
02100005	N/A	Electricity Bill	0	0	1
02100006	N/A	Electricity Bill	1	0	1
02100007	N/A	Electricity Bill	1	0	1
02100011	N/A	Electricity Bill	1	0	1
02100014	N/A	Electricity Bill	1	0	1
02100015	N/A	Electricity Bill	1	0	1
02100016	N/A	Electricity Bill	1	0	1
02100017	N/A	Electricity Bill	1	0	1
02100018	N/A	Electricity Bill	0	0	1
02100019	N/A	Electricity Bill	1	0	1

6. You can also click the *Show in Excel* button to export this table to an Excel sheet.

Print or Email Utility Bills

Once the utility bills have been processed, the final step in the utility billing process is to print or e-mail them.

If this is the first time printing a utility bill and there is a requirement for the security deposit to be shown, ensure that the instructions for [Security Deposits](#) have been completed. Also, for any lot accounts that want to set up a direct debit, a template that includes merge field *field 60* for direct debit instructions, will need to be used. Please see the [Direct Debit](#) article for more details.

If bills are being printed for the first time, it is recommended that the bill for the first lot only be previewed on screen. This provides the opportunity to ensure that it meets requirements. If any changes are required, this can be completed prior to printing all bills.

1. From the *Utility Sub-Group*, search or select the **Utility Billing** menu.
2. Select the *Print Bills* tab.
3. Tag all required lot accounts (to tag all click *Select All* or *Ctrl + A* on the keyboard).
4. Select *Conditions* tab and ensure the *E-Mail/ print as per Contact Preferences* radio button is selected.
 - [Contact Preferences for Utility Bills](#) are set in the Roll menu of the Main Building linked to the Sub-Group.
5. Click the *Print Bills* button.
6. Where a reading has been entered and flagged as an *estimate*, when the bills is printed the word 'Estimated' field will be displayed on the bill as shown below. The system picks up the estimated field (Y) and inserts it next to the appropriate tariff reading.
7. The bill is not actually charged to the lot accounts account until the **Bill is printed**.

Once the utility bill has been printed there will be a copy available to re-produce at any time via the **Stored Reports** menu.

ELECTRICITY BILL

TAX INVOICE
ABN 19 888 888 888

Date of Invoice 27 May 2020
Supply for 28 Days
Account No 02100001

Supply Address
Lot 1/Unit 1 CHERYL UTILITIES CTS 131313
175 Varsity Parade
Varsity Lakes QLD 4227

Peter Smith
PO Box 25
ROBINA QLD 4226

Amount Payable	\$119.05
Payment Required by	11/06/20

Meter Number	Readings	Tariff	kWh	Net Amount
E00001 Electricity (Estimated)	30/04/20 260 28/05/20 352	E-001	92	17.02
Service Fee - Daily Charge				20.00

Security Deposit Held Nil

If payment has been made in the last few days please disregard amount overdue from last bill

GST on \$37.02	3.70
Less Cents Adjustment	0.02
Total Current Charges	40.70
Security Deposit to Pay	100.00
Amount from last bill	-21.65
Amount Payable	\$119.05

Usage	Days	Total kWh	Daily Average
This Bill	28	92	3
Last Bill	60	59	1

