

April 2023

**New Westminster Electric
2023 Customer Satisfaction Survey**



NEW WESTMINSTER



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➤ Foreword

Introduction

At the request of the City of New Westminster, Mustel Group conducted a customer satisfaction survey among New Westminster Electric's (NWE) residential and business customers. The survey was designed to provide a baseline measure of satisfaction with the service received from NWE and to gauge awareness, usage, and satisfaction of its Customer Connect Online platform.

Methodology

- A total of 701 interviews were conducted by telephone: 501 with residential customers and 200 with business customers.
- The sample was drawn randomly from a customer database provided by The City of New Westminster (using a simple random sampling method).
- Households were screened to ensure no employees of the City or NWE were interviewed.
- Interviews were conducted among customers usually responsible for paying the electric bill or managing the NWE account.
- Care was taken to ensure that the customer data was protected at all stages of the research.
- The margin of error on the samples are as follows:
 - Residential n=501: +/-4.4% at the 95% confidence level
 - Business n=200: +/-6.9% at the 95% confidence level

Methodology, cont.

- Interviewing was conducted by Mustel Group staff on weekday evenings and during the day on Saturdays from March 13 to April 4, 2023.
- The questionnaire used is appended.
- Detailed computer tabulations and verbatims (responses to open ended questions) are provided under separate cover.

Residential Sample

A cross-section of New Westminster households was achieved by age, household tenure, and number of people in the household. Please see demographic profile on slide 24 comparing the final sample to population statistics (source: Statistics Canada "Household Maintainer, 2021).

Business Sample

A breakout of businesses by size and sector is provided on slide 25. As anticipated, the majority who participated are small (<50 employees).



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Executive Overview



➤ Overall Satisfaction with New Westminster Electric



86%

of residential customers are satisfied overall with NWE.



88%

of business customers are satisfied overall with NWE.



Among the few who expressed dissatisfaction (4%), **expensive rates** is the most common reason provided.



➤ Satisfaction with Ability to Manage NWE Account



of residential customers



of business customers

are **satisfied overall** with the ways in which they can manage their NWE account on an ongoing basis.



➤ Last Contact with New Westminster Electric



60%

of **residential customers** have contacted NWE in the past, with most having done so **more than 12 months ago**.



66%

of **business customers** have contacted NWE in the past, with **>50%** having done so **within the past 12 months**.



The most common reasons for contacting NWE is to **set up, cancel, or move service**, followed by **questions regarding my bill and service issues**.

Business customers are more likely than **residential customers** to have contacted NWE regarding **service issues (24% vs 10%)**.



➤ Satisfaction with Last Customer Service Experience



83%

of residential customers



85%

of business customers

are **satisfied overall** with their most recent customer service experience.



Among the **6%** of residential customers and **10%** of business customer who expressed dissatisfaction, the most common reasons are **staff were not helpful in resolving their issue** and **communication issues**.



➤ How Customers Receive Their NWE Bill



The majority of New Westminster Electric customers receive a **paper bill in the mail**, including **77%** of residential customers and **82%** of business customers, with the rest receiving an email notification/e-bill.



➤ Customer Connect Platform: Usage and Satisfaction



Approximately **one-half** of all customers are **aware** of the Customer Connect platform.

27% of residential customers and **20%** of businesses **use** the Customer Connect platform.

The majority of users are **satisfied overall** with the platform, including **78%** of residential customers and **88%** of business customers.

Among the few who expressed **dissatisfaction** with it, **not user friendly** and **can't access information** are the most common reasons provided.

Among those who do not use the platform, the most common reasons are **prefer paper bill**, followed by **no need**.



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Detailed Findings

➤ Overall Satisfaction With Service

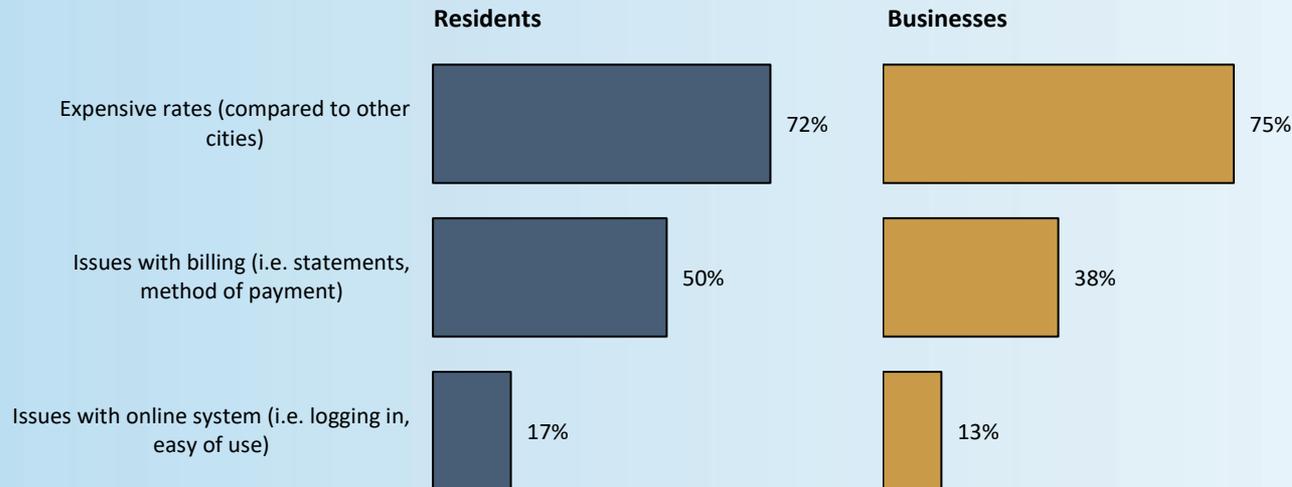


- Overall, most customers, both residential and business, are at least somewhat satisfied with the service they receive from New Westminster Electric (86% and 88% respectively, combined of somewhat satisfied and satisfied), including three-quarters who are “satisfied”.
- Among residential customers, renters reported slightly higher overall satisfaction levels compared with homeowners (90% vs 83% overall satisfied), and those who live in apartments/condos and single-detached homes are somewhat more likely than those in other housing types to report being satisfied with the service they receive (77% and 75% vs 56% satisfied).
- Satisfaction levels are highest among residents who have never contacted NWE vs those who have contacted NWE for any reason in the past (82% compared with 60 to 73%).
- Overall, fewer than one-in-twenty report being dissatisfied overall with the service they receive from NWE (4%).
- There are no significant differences in satisfaction among businesses by size or sector.

Base: Total

Q.1a) Overall, how satisfied are you with the service you receive from New Westminster Electric?

➤ Reasons For **Dissatisfaction** With Service



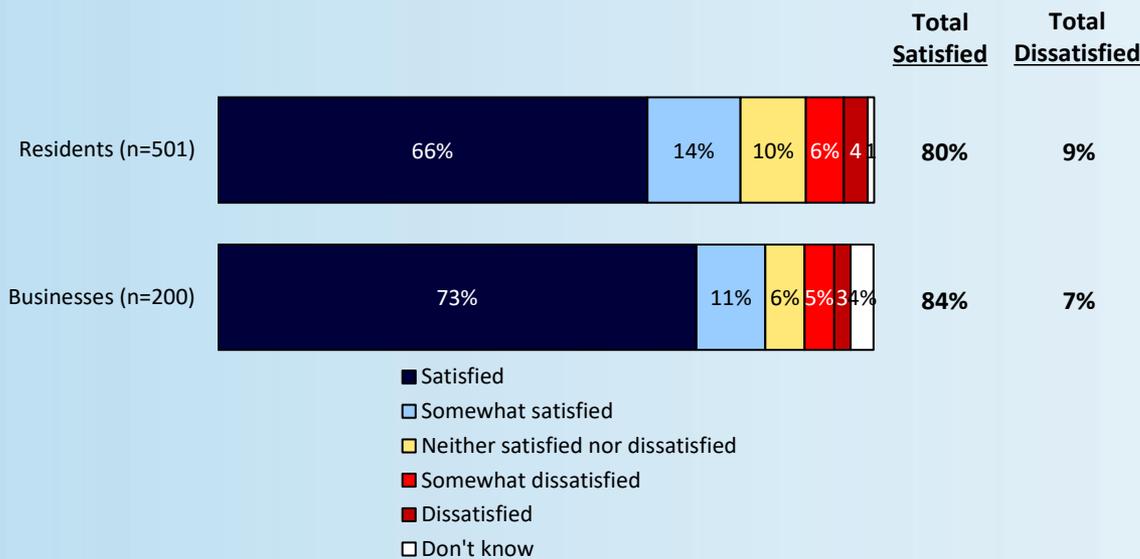
- Among the 4% of residential and business customers who reported being dissatisfied with the service they receive from NWE, “expensive rates” is the most common reason given for this rating (72% among residential and 75% among business customers), followed by “issues with billing” (50%).
- Please interpret these findings with caution due to small base sizes.

Base: Total dissatisfied with service Residents (n=18*), Businesses (n=8*)

Q.1b) Please tell us a bit about why you are [response from above] with the service you receive from New Westminster Electric.

*Caution small base size

➤ Satisfaction With Ability To Manage Account

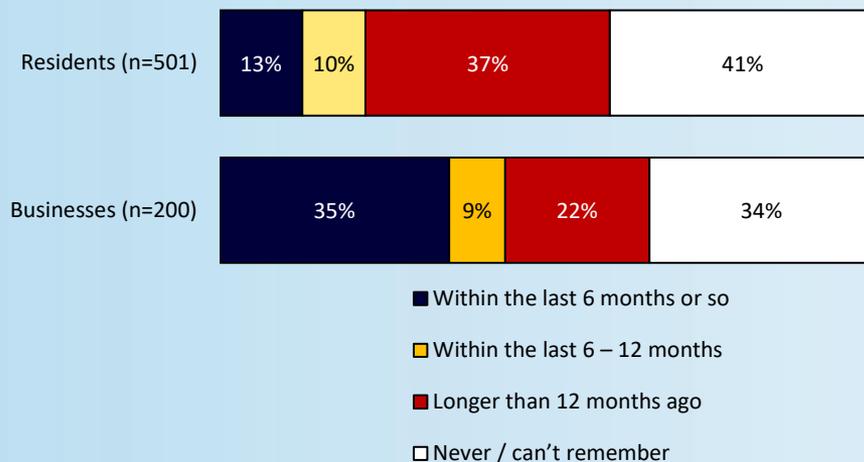


- The majority, approximately eight-in-ten in all, are at least somewhat satisfied with the ways in which they can manage their NWE account on an ongoing basis (80% and 84% overall satisfied among residents and businesses, respectively), including about two-thirds of residents and nearly three-quarters of businesses who are “satisfied” (66% and 73%).
- Residential customers 60 years of age and older are more likely than their younger counterparts to be satisfied, with those 65+ expressing the highest satisfaction (71% satisfied among those 60-64 years of age and 85% among those 65+, compared with 57% of those 18 - 49).
- Those who have never contacted NWE report the highest satisfaction levels, with 87% satisfied overall, compared with 70 to 78% among those who have contacted NWE at any point in the past.
- Among businesses, those aware of the Customer Connect platform are somewhat more likely to be satisfied overall with the ways in which they can manage their account (89% vs 78% overall satisfied, respectively), as are those have never contacted NWE and those whose last contact with was more than 12 months ago.

Base: Total

Q.2) What is your level of satisfaction with the ways in which you are able to manage your New West Electric account on an ongoing basis? For example, receiving and paying bills, accessing your electrical usage information, updating your account information, etc.

➤ Last Contact With New West Electric

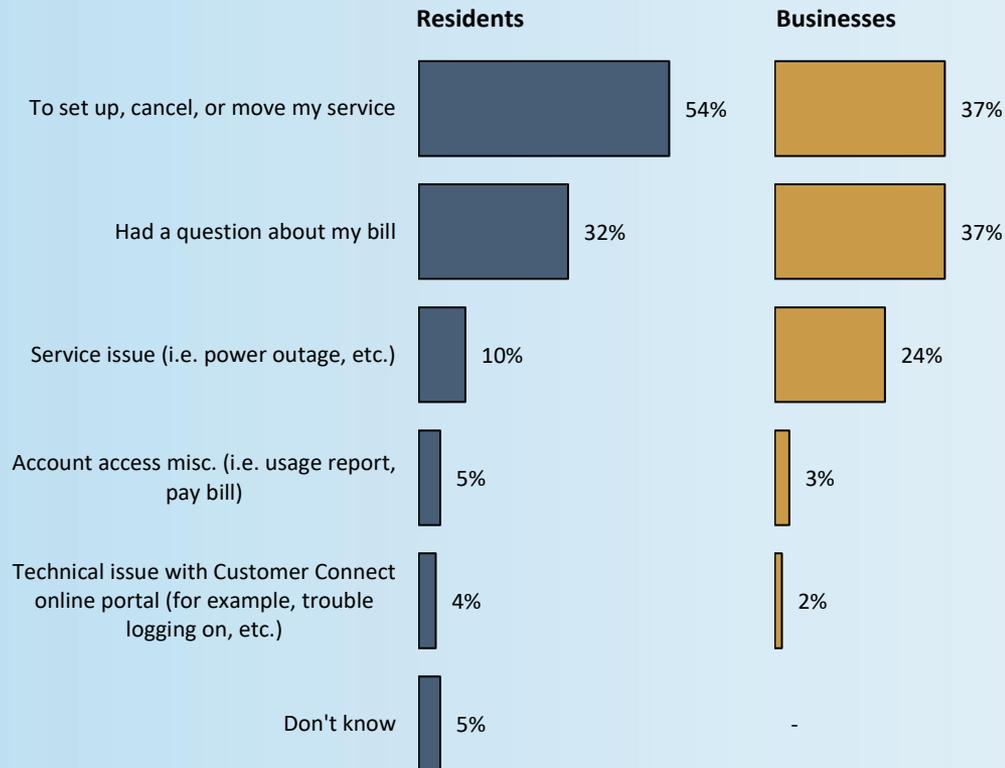


- Approximately six-in-ten residential customers have contacted NWE in the past (60%), with most having done so more than 12 months ago (37%).
- Renters are more likely than owners to have contacted NWE in the last a 6 months, as are those 18 – 64 compared with those 65+.
- About two-thirds of business customers have contacted NWE at some point in the past (66%), with the majority having done so within the past 12 months (44%), including approximately one-third who reached out in the last 6 months (35%).

Base: Total

Q.3) When was the last time you have had to contact someone at New West Electric for any reason? For example, a question about your bill; to set up, cancel, or move your service; service issues; etc.

➤ Reasons For Contacting New West Electric



- Among residential customers who have contacted NWE in the past, the most common reason for doing so is to set up, cancel, or move service, mentioned by just over half (54%), followed by a question about my bill (32%).
- Business customers are equally likely to have contacted NWE to set up, cancel, or move service and regarding questions about their bill (37% in each) but more likely than residential customers to have contacted NWE regarding service issues (24% compared with 10%).

Base: Total contacted Residents (n=298), Businesses (n=131)

Q.4) What was the reason for the call/contact?



➤ Satisfaction With Customer Service Received

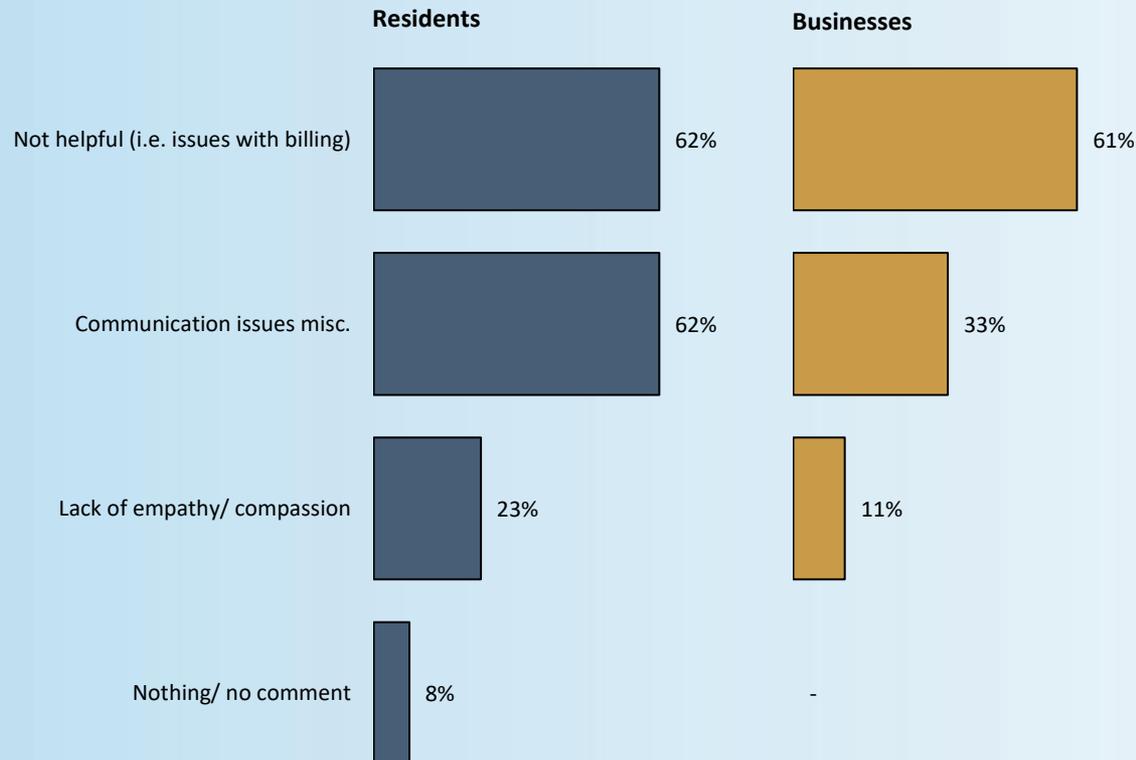


- The majority of customers, more than eight-in-ten in all, are at least somewhat satisfied with the service they received from NWE, including approximately three-quarters who are satisfied (74% and 76% among residents and business, respectively).
- Renters are somewhat more likely than owners to be satisfied overall (90% vs 78% respectively).

Base: Total

Q.5a) Thinking about that experience, what was your level of satisfaction with the customer service you received?

➤ Reasons For **Dissatisfaction** With Customer Service



- Among those dissatisfied with their customer service experience when they last contacted NWE, the most common reasons are that staff were not helpful in resolving their issue and communication issues, with the latter mentioned more often by residential customers than business ones (62% versus 33%).
- Please interpret these findings with caution due to small base sizes.

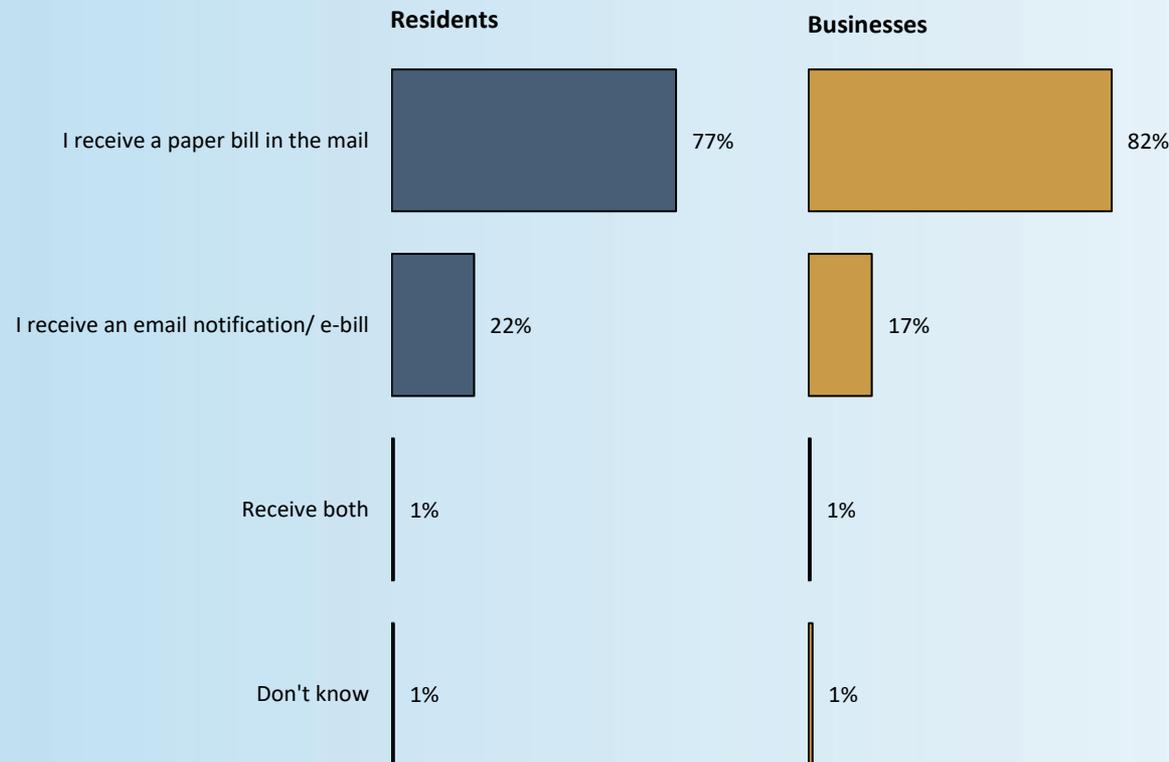
Base: Total dissatisfied with customer service Residents (n=18*), Businesses (n=13*)

Q.5b) Please tell us why you were [response from above] with the customer service you received from New Westminster Electric.

*Caution small business size



Method Of Bill Notification



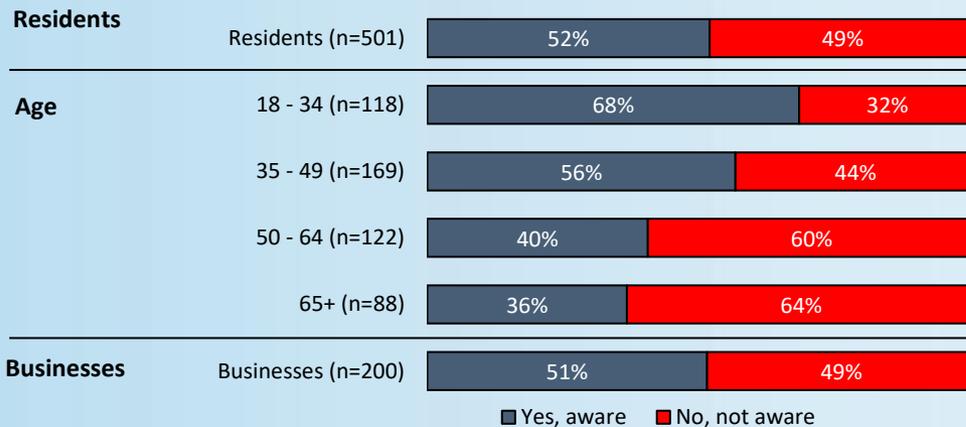
- The majority of customers receive a paper bill in the mail (77% of residents and 82% of businesses).
- Approximately one-in-five receive an e-bill, with slightly more residential customer receiving their hydro bill this way (22% vs 17% - not statistically significant).
- Residential customers 35 years of age and older are more likely than those 18-34 to receive a paper bill (77 to 84% among 35+ compared with 66% among 18-34).
- Both residential and business customers who are aware of or use the Customer Connect online platform are much more likely to receive an electronic bill vs a paper one.

Base: Total Residents (n=501), Businesses (n=200)

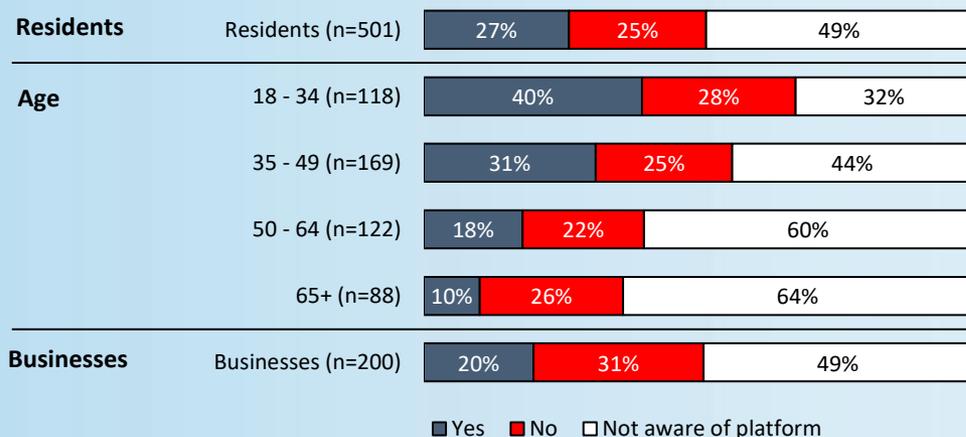
Q.6) How do you receive your electricity bill?

➤ Awareness & Usage Of Customer Connect Online Platform

Familiar with Customer Connect Online Platform



Use Customer Connect Online Platform



- Approximately one-half of all customers are aware of the Customer Connect Online Platform, (52% of residents and 51% of businesses).
- About one-quarter of residential customer use the platform (27%), compared with about one-in-five business customers (20%).
- For both residential and business customers, awareness and usage of the online platform is highest among those who currently receive their bill via an email notification.
- For residential customers, awareness of the platform is highest among those 18-34 (68%) and usage is highest among those 18-49 (40% among 18-34 and 31% among 35-49).

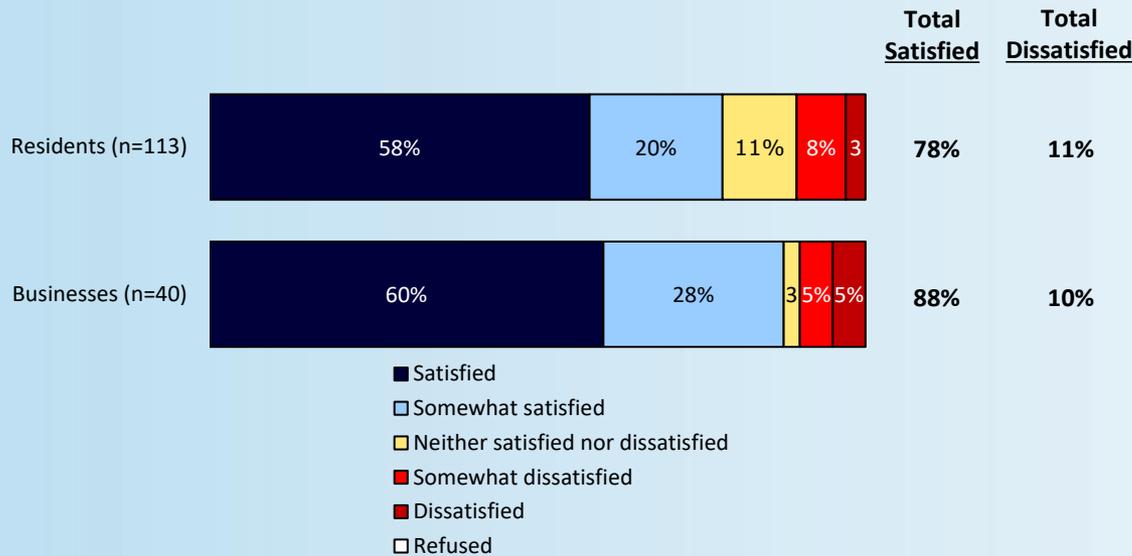
Base: Total

Q.6a) Are you familiar with the Customer Connect online platform where you can view your electrical account info and bills, sign up for e-billing, etc.?

Base: Total aware of Customer Connect online platform
Q.6b) Do you use the Customer Connect online platform?



➤ Satisfaction With Customer Connect Online Platform

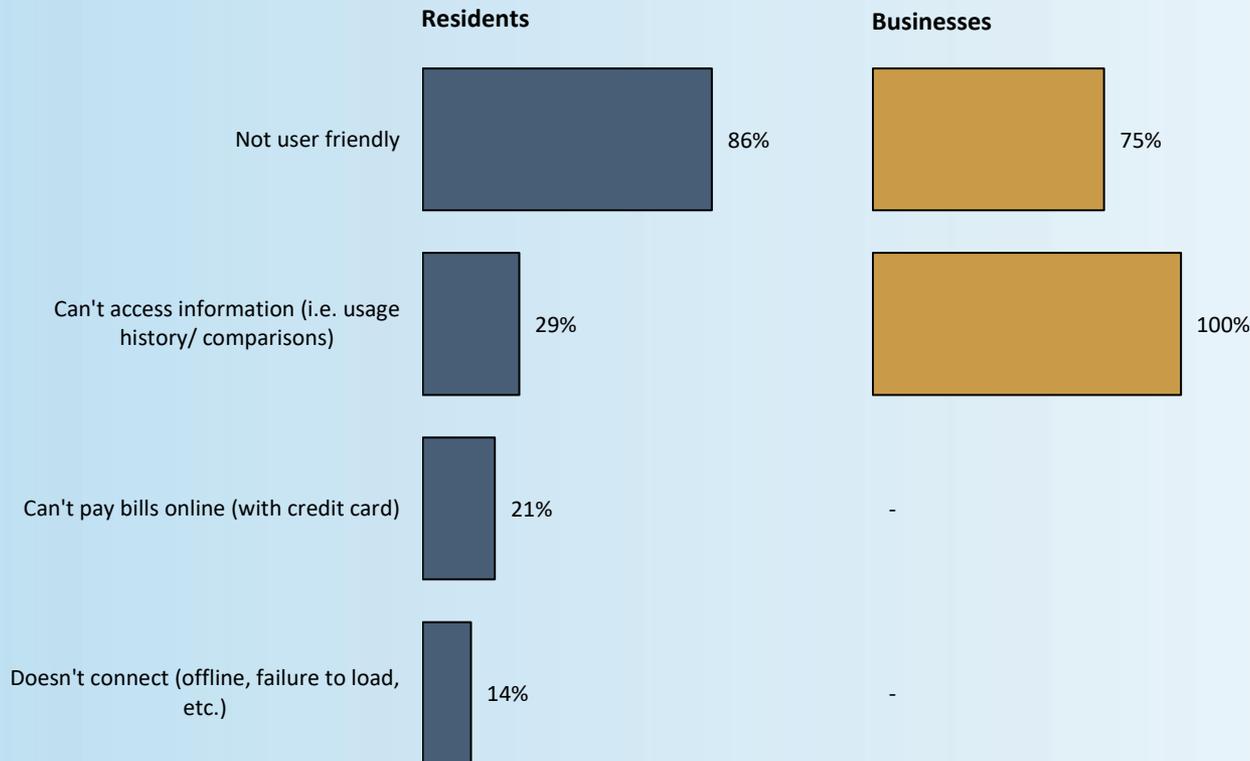


- The majority of those who use the Customer Connect Online Platform are at least somewhat satisfied with it (78% of residents and 88% of businesses), including approximately six-in-ten who are satisfied (58% of residents and 60% of businesses).
- Approximately one-in-ten are at least somewhat dissatisfied with it (11% of residents and 10% of businesses).
- For businesses, the results do not vary by size or sector.

Base: Total used Customer Connect online platform

Q.7a) How satisfied are you with the Customer Connect online platform? Prompt if needed: for example, ease of use, what you're able to do, etc..

➤ Reasons For **Dissatisfaction** With Customer Connect



- Among the few residential customers who are dissatisfied with the platform, the most common reason for their rating is that it's not user friendly (86%).
- Among the very few business customers who expressed dissatisfaction with the platform, all noted that they couldn't access information such as usage history.
- Please interpret with caution due to small base sizes.

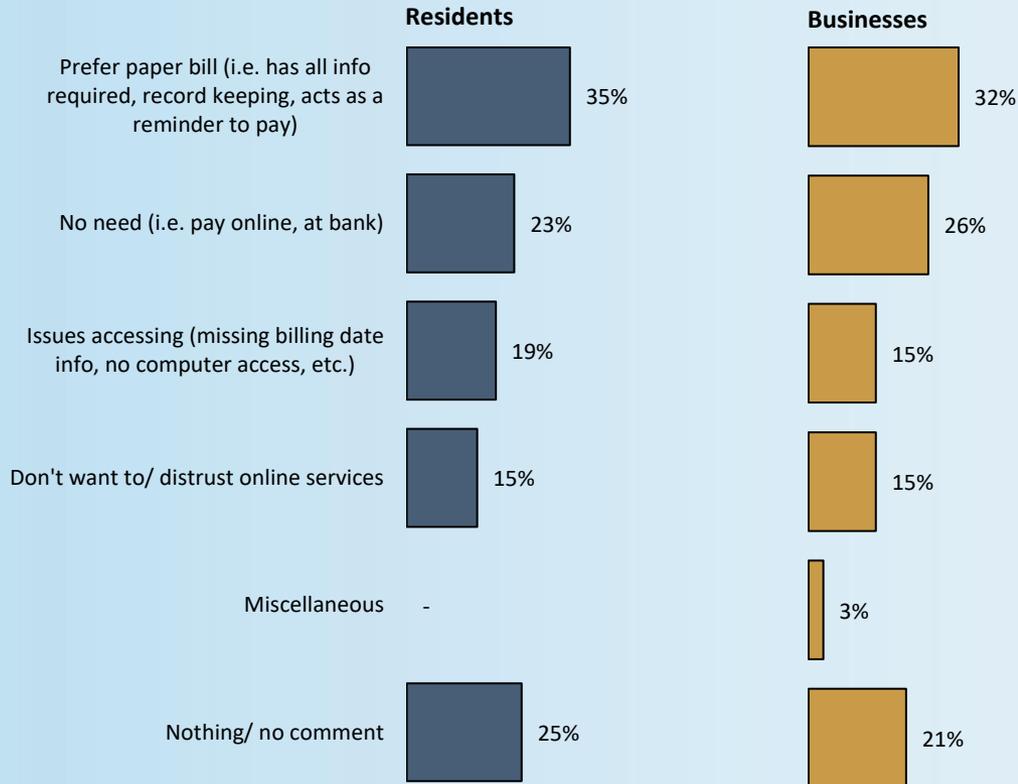
Base: Total dissatisfied with Customer Connect online platform Residents (n=14*), Businesses (n=4*)

Q.7b) Please tell us why you were [response from above] with the customer service you received from New Westminster Electric.

*Caution small base size



Reasons For **Not Using** Customer Connect



- Among customers who do not use the Customer Connect platform, the top reason is that they “Prefer paper bill”, followed by “No need”.

Base: Total do not use Customer Connect online platform Residents (n=125), Businesses (n=62)

Q.8) Why don't you use it?



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Demographics



Demographic Profile Residential

	Total (501) %	Stats ("HOUSEHOLD MAINTAINER") %
Age		
18 - 34	24	21
35 - 49	34	29
50 - 64	24	28
65 years and over	18	22
Refused	1	-
Home Tenure		
Tenant	42	45
Property owner	58	55
Refused	<1	-
Type of Residence		
Standalone (detached) home	17	-
Condo/ apartment	74	-
Townhouse	9	-
Secondary suite	<1	-
Other	1	-
Number of Household Residents	Average 2.3	-
1	32	37
2	35	34
3	15	14
4	12	10
5+	6	5
Refused	1	-

	Total (501) %
Household Composition	
Single, with no children living at home	32
Couple, with no children living at home	26
Single, with children living at home	6
Couple, with children living at home	26
Live with other relatives/extended family	5
Live with unrelated room-mates	3
Refused	2



➤ Demographic Profile **Businesses**

	<u>Total</u> (200) %
Number of Employees	
Self-employed with no paid help	14
1 – 9	57
10 – 49	24
50+	6
50 - 99	1
100 – 499	5
500+	1
Refused	1
Sector	
Accommodation/Food Services	27
Other services	24
Retail goods	21
Professional Services (i.e. legal, engineering, architectural, etc.)	13
Natural resources, construction and/or utilities	5
Arts, entertainment and recreation	4
Manufacturing	4
Transportation & Warehousing	3
Tourism operators and venues	1
Refused	1



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Questionnaire

March 2023: Electric Utility – Customer Satisfaction Survey

To be administered by Mustel Group via PHONE only

**Note: separate forms will be prepared for residential and business customers – same questions and flow, but will be called from separate customer lists.*

Introduction: Hello, my name is [INTERVIEWER}, I'm calling on behalf of New Westminster Electric from the Mustel Research Group, to conduct a brief customer satisfaction survey. If asked: The survey takes less than 5 minutes to complete.

Screener: Are you or anyone in your household currently an employee at the City of New Westminister, or the New Westminister Electrical Utility?

1. No
2. Yes **(thank and end call)**

S1. Are you the person in your household/business who usually pays the electricity bill / manages the New Westminister Electric account?

1. Yes
2. No **(May I speak to the person responsible for managing the account?)**

Thank you. Please note that data collected from this survey will be presented in aggregate only and will be used to improve New Westminister Electric's customer service.

This collection of personal information is authorized under Charter and section 26(e) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

If asked:

Questions about the collection of this information may be directed to: Josh O'Neill, General Manager Mustel Group 3058 West 36th Avenue 604-742-2245

Questions concerning privacy can be directed to the City of New Westminister at: revenue@newwestcity.ca

Q1. Overall, how satisfied are you with the service you receive from New Westminister Electric?

5. Satisfied
4. Somewhat satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
2. Somewhat dissatisfied
1. Dissatisfied

If Q1=1 or 2:

Q1a. Please tell us a bit about why you are [response from above] with the service you receive from New Westminster Electric. (open response).

Q2. What is your level of satisfaction with the ways in which you are able to manage your New West Electric account on an ongoing basis? For example, receiving and paying bills, accessing your electrical usage information, updating your account information, etc.

5. Satisfied
4. Somewhat satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
2. Somewhat dissatisfied
1. Dissatisfied

Q3. When was the last time you have had to contact someone at New West Electric for any reason? For example, a question about your bill; to set up, cancel, or move your service; service issues; etc.

1. Within the last 6 months or so
2. Within the last 6 - 12 months
3. Longer than 12 months ago
4. Never / can't remember **(skip to Q6)**

Q4. What was the reason for the call/contact?

1. Had a question about my bill
2. To set up, cancel, or move my service
3. Service issue (i.e. power outage, etc.)
4. Technical issue with Customer Connect online portal (for example, trouble logging on, etc.)
5. Other (specify):

Q5. Thinking about that experience, what was your level of satisfaction with the customer service you received?

5. Satisfied
4. Somewhat satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (neutral)
2. Somewhat dissatisfied
1. Dissatisfied

If Q5a=1 or 2:

Q5b. Please tell us why you were [response from above] with the customer service you received from New Westminster Electric.

Q6. How do you receive your electricity bill? Residential bills are sent once every two months; businesses are billed monthly.

1. I receive a paper bill in the mail
2. I receive an email notification / e-bill
3. Other, please specify:

Q6a. Are you familiar with the Customer Connect online platform where you can view your electrical account info and bills, sign up for e-billing, etc.?

1. Yes, aware
2. No, not aware

If Q6a=1:

Q6b. Do you use the Customer Connect online platform?

1. Yes
2. No

If Q6b=1:

Q7. How satisfied are you with the Customer Connect online platform? Prompt if needed: for example, ease of use, what you're able to do, etc.

5. Satisfied
4. Somewhat satisfied
3. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
2. Somewhat dissatisfied
1. Dissatisfied

If Q7=1 or 2:

Please tell us why you are [Q7 response]. (open response)

If Q6a=1 AND Q6b=2

Q8. Why don't you use it? (open response)

Residential Demographics Questions:

A. What is your age category?

1. 18 – 34
2. 35 – 49
3. 50 – 64
4. 65 & older

B. Are you a tenant or residential property owner?

1. Tenant
2. Property owner

C. Which of the following best describes your New West home?

1. Standalone (detached) home
2. Condo / apartment
3. Townhouse
4. Secondary suite
5. Other, please specify:

D. How many people regularly reside in your household?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5+

E. How would you describe your household composition? Are you...

- Single, with no children living at home (PIPED IN IF 1 ABOVE)
- Couple, with no children living at home
- Single, with children living at home
- Couple, with children living at home
- Live with other relatives/extended family
- Live with unrelated room-mates
- Other _____

F. What is your postal code?

Business Demographics Questions:

A. Approximately how many employees does your business have? *(will be asked in an open-ended way and interviewer will select the appropriate category)*

- Self-employed with no paid help
- 1-9
- 10-49
- 50-99
- 100-499
- 500+

B. In what sector does your business operate? (Please select one.)

- Accommodation/Food Services
- Arts, entertainment and recreation
- Professional Services (i.e. legal, engineering, architectural, etc.)

Other Services

Advertising/Public Relations

Finance & Insurance

Manufacturing

Transportation & Warehousing

Retail goods

Natural resources, construction and/or utilities

Tourism operators and venues

Transportation

Other, please specify: _____