

Industrial Electricity Consumption Jumps 5.9% in Brazil

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Friday, 19 May 2006

Brazil's Energy Research Corporation (Empresa de Pesquisa Energética) (EPE) reports that total electricity consumption rose 6.5% in March, compared to March 2005.

The EPE says the increase was boosted by strong residential consumption, which rose 7.5%, compared to an increase of 7.1% in the commercial sector.

The number of residential consumers was up 3% in March, reaching 48.8 million. That works out to a total increase of 1.4 million residences between March 2005 and March 2006, or around 117,000 new residential consumers per month.

Average residential consumption for the month of March was 151 kwh - an increase of 4.1% over March 2005. But, to put this in another perspective, it is still 18% below what average residential consumption was in 2000, before Brazil had an electricity shortfall and a period of rationing.

Meanwhile, the industrial sector, which consumes 44% of the electricity in Brazil, after sluggish performance in January and February, when consumption rose 1% and 2%, respectively, saw electricity consumption rise sharply in March by 5.9%.

Agência Brasil