



CUSTOMER FACTS



Electric Meters

The utility's electric meter is the key to making sure that customer bills are accurate. Homes and businesses receiving electricity are required to have an electric meter to measure how much electricity is used. Electric meters are generally read once per month.

Who is responsible for meters?

The electric customer and the electric utility share responsibility. Electric utilities install and maintain meters at customer locations to ensure proper measurement and billing of electric service. It is the responsibility of the electric utility to maintain the accuracy of the electric meters. Electric utilities must replace any meter that does not measure electricity used within applicable standards for accuracy. It is the customer's responsibility to provide an appropriate location, necessary equipment, such as an electric meter can and wiring, and access to the meter.

Meters must be accessible.

It is the customer's responsibility to provide the electric utility access to the meter in order to ensure readings and accurate billing. This may include containing pets on meter reading days, ensuring gates are not locked, ensuring that cars and dumpsters are not blocking the meter, providing special instructions for meter readers, or whatever else is necessary to provide meter access. The utility is required to leave a notice on the customer's door advising the customer to make changes or arrangements to allow meter access. The utility must let the customer's Retail Electric Provider (REP) know when a meter is inaccessible, so that the REP can also contact the customer and encourage resolving the meter's inaccessibility.

What if I don't comply?

If a meter remains inaccessible for three months, the customer has three options: have his or her electric service disconnected, have the power company install a remotely read meter at the customer's expense, or have the utility relocate the existing meter to a more accessible location at the customer's expense. If the customer does not make one of these choices, his/her REP may make the choice on behalf of the customer, who will either

be disconnected or charged. The utility may also estimate the customer's electricity usage (based on previous usage) for up to three months when the meter can't be accessed.

A customer may request their meter be relocated, but the customer is responsible for hiring an electrician and for any cost incurred during meter relocation.

Is my meter reading accurate?

If a customer believes the meter reading is not accurate, the customer can request a meter re-read or a meter test. If the customer requests a meter re-read, the utility will re-read the meter outside of the normal meter reading schedule, but they may charge the customer a fee if the re-reading indicates that the initial reading was correct. If the customer requests a meter test, the utility will test the meter for accuracy. If the meter has been tested during the past four years, the utility may charge the customer a meter testing fee if the test shows that the meter is operating within applicable standards for accuracy. The customer may request to be present during the meter re-read or test. If deemed necessary by the utility, they may test the meter at their laboratory. The utility is required to give the customer a report with the results and advising when, by whom, and where the test was made. Check with your utility company for the fees associated with meter re-reads and testing.

The Future

Metering technology has evolved substantially over the years, and the current meters are beginning to be replaced by Smart Meters. These "smart" meters are advanced, using digital electronic and communications technologies. Smart Meter deployment has already begun in Texas. Most companies are planning to distribute the meters in phases. Check with your utility to find out about their Smart Meter campaign and distribution dates:

www.smarttexas.com

<http://www.centerpointenergy.com/services/electricity/residential/smartmeters/>

Let Us Assist You

QUESTIONS:

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