

Smart Grid and Advanced Metering Infrastructure



spotlight

Smart Grid

Smart Grid refers to the process of integrating modern technology into the existing electrical power grid to improve reliability, quality and efficiency. This process will enable various components of the grid the ability to communicate wirelessly in order to improve electricity delivery from the utility companies to consumers.

Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

One component of the grid that is being upgraded right now is the electric meter. Major electric utility companies in Michigan and across the United States are replacing existing electric meters with new Advanced Metering Infrastructure meters (smart meters). These meters wirelessly transmit electronic meter readings to your utility, virtually eliminating the need for on-site meter reading. The meters will also provide a host of other benefits.

Consumer Benefits

Two-way communication between consumers and utilities comes with many advantages. The utility can monitor systems to ensure proper operation, functionality, and efficiency. Consumer benefits include:

Customer Web Portal

View daily and hourly electricity consumption of your household with an online web portal.

Improved Bill Accuracy

Near elimination of estimated bills and incorrect meter reads.

Outage Detection

Notification to the utility of an outage and assistance with pinpointing the exact location of the problem, allowing for quicker restoration of electric service.

Grid Reliability

Increased ability to monitor grid conditions making it possible to anticipate and mitigate potential power integrity issues, resulting in fewer outages and power quality events.

It is important to remember that the technology and programs that enable this two-way communication are always evolving, similar to the Internet when it was first being tested and developed. The customer benefits discussed earlier should increase in the future as programs are fine-tuned and technology continues to advance.

Access Is Vital For You and Your Utility Installer

Providing safe access to your utility meter is the best way to ensure you receive reliable and accurately billed service.

Customer Responsibilities

Meter Service Technicians are unfamiliar people and their presence on your property can provoke a pet, such as a dog. As a customer, your responsibilities are to:

- Confine pets indoors or chained away from the meter.
- Clear tall grass, shrubs, vehicles, leaves, snow, icicles, etc. that may hide or damage the meter.
- Unlock your gate or call to arrange an installation time if your gate must remain locked.

Who Pays for AMI Meters?

As with all other utility infrastructure (e.g. poles, distribution lines, transformers, etc.), meters are the property of the utility. The cost to improve utility infrastructure is covered by the rates utility customers pay. While regulated utility companies are privately owned, Michigan law requires them to have approval from the Michigan Public Service Commission before passing business costs onto the consumer through rates.

Voluntary Non-Transmitting Meter Provisions

Most meter companies no longer manufacture the existing electro-mechanical (analog) meters as the transition from analog to AMI meters takes place across the country. The MPSC, however, recognizes that a small minority of customers do not want a meter that transmits wirelessly, and Non-Transmitting Meter Provisions have been developed to allow customers a choice.

DTE Electric

In May 2013, the MPSC approved a DTE initial Non-Transmitting Meter fee of \$67.20, and a monthly service fee of \$9.80 for customers who choose not to receive a transmitting AMI meter. Customers who select the non-transmitting meter will have their new meter installed and the radio disabled so it will not transmit wirelessly.

Consumers Energy

In June 2013, the MPSC approved Consumers Energy's Non-Transmitting Meter Provision for customers who choose not to have a transmitting AMI meter. This provision consists of an initial fee of either \$69.39 if a transmitting meter has not yet been installed or \$123.91 if a transmitting meter has already been installed. A monthly service fee of \$9.72 will also be charged to all customers who choose a non-transmitting meter. Customers will either retain their existing non-transmitting meter or have a non-transmitting meter reinstalled if a transmitting meter has been placed on their property. Certain customers may not qualify for this provision.

For More Information

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) staff can assist if you have difficulty resolving issues regarding your utilities.

If a problem cannot be resolved by speaking with your utility company, contact the MPSC:

-toll free at 800-292-9555

-online at michigan.gov/mpsc/complaints

-by mail using P.O. Box 30221

Lansing, MI 48909

-by fax at 517-241-6272