

ADVANCED METERS- FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is an Advanced Meter?

- AMS stands for Advanced Metering System. The meters used today at most homes and small businesses are generally based on 50-year-old technology. While these meters do a great job of reliably and accurately measuring the amount of electricity consumed “after the fact,” they do not provide the kind of information needed by consumers today to allow them to be smarter about how they use electricity.
- With the new advanced meters, consumers will have access to near-real-time information that they will need to better manage their electricity usage. Advanced meters will also ultimately enable Retail Electric Providers (REP) to develop and offer new, innovative rate plans that will provide additional ways for consumers to lower their bills.

Why am I being charged a fee for the new meter before I actually get the new meter?

- Working with the state's regulators and following guidance from the state legislators, this is the most cost effective manner to deploy these meters. The cost recovery time period would be the same regardless of when the surcharge began. By starting the surcharge now, your transmission and distribution company (TDU) or “wires company” will be able to secure the meters at a low cost and prevent different customers from paying different amounts or from the cost being higher than the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) has approved.
- If you are a customer of an electric cooperative or municipally owned utility like Austin Energy, please contact your utility directly.

What is an in-home device?

- An in-home display monitor is a wireless device that easily installs anywhere in the home. It electronically talks to the advanced meter to display how much electricity is being consumed in the home and can convert that usage into a dollar amount to show how much you are spending with the click of a button.

What benefits will I get out of the new meter?

- Advanced meters will enable you to have greater control over your energy usage. Today, most consumers don't fully understand how much electricity they have used until they get their monthly bill - too late for them to take action and make a difference. By having access to real time information on how you consume energy, you can begin to make smarter decisions and change behaviors to help you reduce your consumption, or modify your usage patterns.
- Provides easier switching for customers among retail electric providers (REPs) and shortens the length of time, from weeks to days that a customer must wait before switching to a new REP.
- Grants TDUs quicker remote outage detection and power restoration for their customers.

When will I get my new meter?

- As of January 2009, two Texas utility companies, Oncor in the Dallas-area and CenterPoint Energy in the Houston-area, have filed and received approval their plans by the PUC. Both companies have begun to install the new meters. To find out more information about both companies deployment schedules, please visit their websites at:
 1. CenterPoint-www.centerpointenergy.com/services/electricity/competitiveretailers/advancedmetering
 2. Oncor- www.smarttexas.com

What do I need to do to get my new meter?

- You won't have to do anything to have the new meters installed. Each utility will send a technician to remove the current electro-mechanical meter from the side of your home and replace it with the new advanced meter. You will be notified prior to this taking place.
- If you are a customer of an electric cooperative or municipally owned utility like Austin Energy, please contact your utility directly.