



# CUSTOMER FACTS

## Smart Meters or Advanced Metering System (AMS)

Every residence or business has an on-site electric meter that registers the amount of energy consumed. The most common meters, which are electromechanical, must be read monthly by meter readers who come to your home or place of business and record the usage displayed on the face of the unit. This usage represents the total kilowatt hours (kWh), or electrical units, that were consumed for the previous month (billing cycle).

Metering technology has evolved substantially over the years, and the current mechanical meters are beginning to be replaced by more efficient Smart Meters. These new meters have digital communications capabilities. Initially, these meters will process and confirm energy consumption directly through your Transmission and Distribution Utility (TDU).

When fully implemented, this state-of-the-art technology will help provide all consumers with many features.

### Smart Meter Features:

- You will have more choice and control over your electric usage and bill.
- The new meters will record electricity use in 15-minute intervals instead of once a month like the old meters, providing customers more choice and control over their electric usage and expenses.
- Smart Meters will provide instant power outage notice to your TDU and support more reliable and efficient electric delivery to your home.
- Your meter will be read without a meter reader having to come to your home.

- Your meter can be re-read much faster should you have questions.
- Since in-person meter readings will not be required, the number of vehicles on the road will be reduced, thus reducing pollution, traffic, and fuel consumption.
- Eventually, you will have access to detailed readings of your electricity use and corresponding price.
- As meters are installed and enabled, the time needed to process service orders, such as starting or stopping service, will be reduced.
- In the future, the meters will be able to communicate with programmable devices (like your air conditioner or dishwasher) through a Home Area Network (HAN) module to monitor and help control electricity consumption.

### Smart Meter Costs

In 2005, the Texas Legislature directed the Public Utility Commission (PUC) to authorize electric delivery companies in competitive markets to assess a surcharge to recover the costs of Smart Meters. This surcharge will be shared among all electricity users receiving a new meter and will be added to customers' bills.

### When will I get my Smart Meter?

Smart Meter distribution has already begun in some communities. Most companies are planning to distribute the meters in phases. Check with your TDU, municipality, or co-op to find out about their Smart Meter plans, costs, and distribution dates.

### Let Us Assist You

#### QUESTIONS:

**Call:** 1-888-782-8477, in Austin 512-936-7120  
(TTY 512-936-7136) (FAX 512-936-7003)

**Visit:** [www.puc.texas.gov](http://www.puc.texas.gov)

**Email:** [customer@puc.texas.gov](mailto:customer@puc.texas.gov)

#### COMPLAINTS:

**Call:** 1-888-782-8477, in Austin 512-936-7120  
(TTY 512-936-7136) (FAX 512-936-7003)

**Write:** PUC - Customer Protection, P.O. Box 13326,  
Austin, TX 78711-3326

**Online:** [www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/complaint/Complaint.aspx](http://www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/complaint/Complaint.aspx)