



Sharyland Utilities Advanced Metering System

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated May 25, 2016

1. What is the Sharyland Utilities (SU) Advanced Metering System plan?

SU filed our Advanced Metering System plan to the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) on January 23, 2015. This plan outlines SU's strategy to deploy advanced meters throughout our service territories to improve customer service and enable customers to proactively control their energy usage.

2. What is an Advanced Meter?

An Advanced Meter, often called a "Smart Meter," is a digital electric meter equipped with wireless communications technology.

3. When will customers receive Advanced Meters?

SU's filed plan is currently on hold at the Public Utility Commission. Once our plan is approved, advanced meters will be deployed throughout all of SU's service territory and will take approximately one year to complete. The Advanced Meter deployment plan is posted on Sharyland.com.

4. Why is SU replacing traditional meters with Advanced Meters and what are the benefits?

Advanced Meter Systems offer several advancements in SU's operational abilities, which ultimately benefit our customers. These benefits include:

- **Improved customer service** - Through remote capabilities, SU can provide faster meter reading and service connections.
- **Improved outage response** - Advanced Meters will automatically show outage locations so repairs can begin quickly.
- **More privacy** - Advanced Meters can be read remotely so meter readers no longer have to enter your property. SU will still need occasional access for testing and maintenance.
- **Reduction in service fees** - With remote connection capabilities, service fees will be reduced.
- **Expanded product options** - Retail Electric Providers (REPs) may offer new, innovative price plans, such as time-of-use rates or pre-paid pricing.
- **Accessible energy data** - Customers can better control their energy usage and budget accordingly.

5. Where can customers access their electricity usage information?

After all of SU's service areas have active advanced meters installed customers can view their electricity usage online by registering at www.SmartMeterTexas.com. This site allows customers to make informed energy use choices by having access to more timely and detailed information about their electricity usage.

6. Will the communications system interfere with home equipment?

No. All communications equipment meets criteria set by the Federal Communications Commission and should not interfere with any equipment inside a home or business.

7. Will customer account and usage information remain secure and confidential?

Yes. SU is required to comply with all state and federal laws regarding the privacy, protection and disclosure of personal information. The meters and the associated communications system are encrypted and equipped with security features to prevent unauthorized access.

8. I understand that Advanced Meters use radio frequency (RF) communication. Is this safe?

Yes. Advanced Meters use the same FCC-approved radio frequencies that have been used for many years in devices such as cellular phones, baby monitors, remote controlled toys and medical monitors.

SU and neighboring co-ops have used radio frequency meters for meter reading in rural areas for many years. The new Advanced Meters are no different in terms of exposure to radio frequencies.

In order to prevent serious health impact from exposure to RFs, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), with the advice of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and other health and safety agencies, has set limits on power densities from electronic devices.

The smart meter, which is usually installed on the exterior of a building, such as a home, emits an occasional RF signal that is typically less than one-tenth of the FCC standard and is considered safe for everyday exposure.

To learn more about radio frequency technology and safety, visit the FCC website at: www.fcc.gov/oet/rfsafety.

9. Can a customer opt out of the program if the new meter is not wanted?

Yes. Upon a customer's request, SU will provide written notice containing the initial one-time fee and on-going monthly fee associated with non-standard metering service once approved by the PUC.

10. How will SU notify customers when the Advanced Meters will be installed?

SU will notify customers through its outreach advertising program. Prior to installation, door hangers will be placed at residences that are to receive Advanced Meters. The door hanger also will contain useful information about the benefits of Advanced Meters.

11. Will customers have to pay for the Advanced Meter?

Yes. Customers will pay for the meters over time with a monthly surcharge on their electric bill starting once the PUCT approves SU's Advanced Meter plan.

12. What is a meter socket and what does this mean for retail electric customers?

The circular opening that the electric meter plugs into in front of the meter box is known as an electric meter box socket. State law requires that if the meter socket is damaged or is not operational, the customer will be responsible for the meter socket purchase and installation from a licensed electrician.

13. Will a meter reader still need to come around to read the meter?

After initial installation, meters will continue to be read in the traditional fashion for a period of time until the system is fully functional. Afterwards, Advanced Meters will be read automatically so that meter readers no longer will have to enter a customer's property every month. However, SU employees will continue to need access to the meter for periodic safety and quality assurance inspections and maintenance.

14. What does two-way communication mean?

Advanced Meters are two-way communication devices that interact between the consumer and power companies. This allows the ability to remotely determine if the meter is energized, read the meter, and energize and de-energize meters at a specific premise, which ultimately provides greater outage management, privacy and customer service.

15. Are there ways that I can work with my REP to reduce my bills?

Retail Electric Providers (REPs) have the ability to provide time-of-use rates and other offerings to give customers more options and rate offerings. Some REPs offer an interruptible power rate for customers who agree to have their power curtailed in consideration for a lower rate. These programs will only be with the consent of the electric consumer. Sharyland customers will have the ability to access these programs from their REP once the plan is fully implemented.