



SMART METER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

NEW MEXICO



General Information

What is a smart meter and how does it work?

A smart meter is a digital meter that remotely tracks energy use in near real time and sends the data to El Paso Electric (EPE) through a secure communication network. Most residential customers will be able to see their energy use in 15-minute increments. This technology is not available with your current meter. The constant flow of data will help the utility better support its customers and respond to changing conditions on the electric grid.

Why is EPE switching to smart meters?

This change is needed to improve EPE's customer offerings and help customers better manage their energy use. Making smart energy choices based on energy consumption data can lead to lower electric bills and a healthier environment. Customers will have the option to receive customized energy saving tips and bill alerts based on their energy use. The new meters will also help with outage management and improve EPE's efficiency, accuracy, and reliability.

Many larger communities across the country already have smart meters, and some utilities are even preparing to install the next generation of smart meters. According to the [Energy Information Administration](#), approximately 103 million smart meters have been installed throughout the U.S. as of 2020.

Where will the new smart meters be installed?

The entire EPE service area is receiving smart meters. Customers will be assigned an installation date based on several factors, including the number of customer accounts in each zip code, density of the region, meter accessibility, and proximity to the meter warehouses. The actual meters will be installed in the same location as your current meter.

Will I get a smart meter if I live in an apartment/ multi-unit building or rent a home?

Yes, the entire EPE service area is receiving smart meters.

Will my personal information be protected?

Yes, your information will remain secure with smart meters, which send electricity use information remotely via a secure communication network. All readings will be encrypted, and no personal information will be sent through the network.

Are smart meters dangerous to my health?

No, the radio frequency technology being used to support the smart meter network is safe and poses no known health risks. According to studies conducted by the Electric Power Research Institute, the radio frequency exposure is significantly less than cell phones, microwaves, and radio/TV broadcasts.

Do I need to be connected to the Internet to use a smart meter?

No, smart meters use a secure communication network to send information to EPE. So, even if you do not have access to the Internet, the meter will still work.

Will the installation of smart meters result in layoffs?

Layoffs are not expected. EPE supports economic growth and job development. Meter readers will have modified job responsibilities, including managing and maintaining the new technology. Over time, if there is a need to reduce the workforce related to this task, it will be achieved through attrition as opposed to layoffs.

My smart meter has been installed. What do I do now?

Create an online customer account under the "Manage My Account" section of the EPE website and download the EPE mobile app available in the Apple Store and on Google Play. Once you have access, we encourage you to visit the Smart Energy Tools section of the portal to begin tracking your energy use. We also encourage you to complete a free home energy analysis. It takes less than five minutes and will help you learn more about your energy habits.

You can also use the portal to:

- View your historical energy consumption data.
- Compare bills against yourself and your neighbors.
- Forecast bill amounts.
- View your highest energy use days.
- Sign up to receive customized energy saving tips.

Benefits

What are the benefits of smart meters?

There are several benefits for customers and EPE, including:

- Enhances reliability and resiliency since the utility can remotely monitor the electric grid and identify opportunities for preventative maintenance and infrastructure improvements.
- Provides accurate energy consumption data in near real time, which allows customers to monitor energy use patterns and adjust as needed to save money and help the environment.

- Gives customers the option to sign up to receive customized energy saving tips and bill alerts.
- Automatically alerts EPE to power outages and improves restoration time.
- Expands customer service options, including electric vehicles and solar panels.
- Eliminates manual meter readings.
- Decreases time required to start, stop, or transfer electric service.
- Provides more rate and payment options for customers.

When can I begin to monitor my energy use?

A week after your meter has been installed, you can begin monitoring daily and monthly energy consumption in the [Manage My Account](#) portal on the EPE website. You can also manage your account by downloading the EPE app in the [Apple Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

Will my smart meter help pinpoint power outages?

Yes, smart meters improve outage management by automatically alerting EPE to outages, even before a customer reports them. This helps reduce the time required to restore power to affected customers.

Do I still need to call EPE to report an outage?

No, the smart meter technology should automatically alert EPE about your outage. Customers who enroll in EPE's outage notification system will be alerted any time there is an outage. If you are experiencing an outage and have not received a notification from EPE, please contact Customer Care at 575-523-7591.

Rates

Are my rates going to increase? Do I have to pay for the installation?

Customers will be charged a surcharge on their monthly electric bill to help pay for the smart meters. To help offset this surcharge, customers can use the smart meter technology to manage their energy use and control costs. In New Mexico, the average residential customer will pay approximately \$1.60 per month.

How do I know if I am the target of a scam?

The contractors will NOT ask for payment, personal information, or account information. The meter installers will announce themselves as EPE contractors. Their badges will include the EPE logo as well as the contractor logo. Each contractor will be assigned a unique identification number, which will be listed on their badge. You will have the option to verify that the contractor is scheduled to be on your property. If you believe you are the target of a scam, please report it immediately to [EPE](#).

Will my new meter change how I pay my electric bill?

There will be no changes to how you pay your electric bill. To see your bill payment options, visit [EPE's Bill Management Center](#).

Should I be worried that my power will automatically be turned off if I'm behind on my payment?

While smart meters will give EPE the ability to remotely start, stop, or transfer service, they will not change the disconnection process for customers who are behind on their electric bill payments. EPE must still abide by the rules established by the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission. [Click here](#) for more information on the steps required prior to disconnecting power.

What is the total cost of the EPE smart meter project?

The total cost of the smart meter project is approximately \$146 million.

Meter Installation

When is my smart meter being installed?

Smart meter installations for New Mexico customers are underway and will continue through 2025.

You can enter your ZIP code on EPE's [smart meter website](#) to find out when your meter is being installed. You will also receive a postcard 60 days prior to your installation.

Meter installations will take place during normal business hours (Monday – Friday between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m.) or during your scheduled appointment time.

What does the smart meter look like?

The smart meter will look the same as your old meter. It's the technology behind the meter that is different.

What should I expect on installation day?

Customers do not need to be present for the meter changeout, and no appointment is needed except under special circumstances. EPE is coordinating directly with the installers. However, customers should ensure there is adequate clearance around their meter.

Upon arrival, the meter installers will announce themselves as EPE contractors with Texas Meter & Device or TMD. Their badges will include the EPE logo as well as the TMD logo. Each contractor will be assigned a unique identification number, which will be listed on their badge. These identification numbers can be used to verify that the contractors are supposed to be on the property. They will NOT ask for payment, personal information, or account information.

Meter installers will attempt to contact the property owner by knocking on the door, ringing the doorbell, and verbally announcing they are on the property. If no one answers and access to the meter is available, the installer will proceed with the exchange and leave a door hanger indicating the work has been completed and no action is required. The process should only take about 15 minutes and requires turning off the power to safely perform the work.

If a customer has a special need such as medical, they should contact EPE at 575-526-5555 to schedule an appointment.

Installers will make two attempts to perform the meter exchange. If they are unable to do the swap due to lack of access to the meter (i.e., locked gates, dogs, etc.), they will leave a door hanger asking the customer to contact TMD at 888-681-0551 to schedule an appointment.

I'm on life support equipment and can't afford to lose my power. What should I do?

You can contact us at 575-526-5555 to schedule an appointment for your smart meter installation.

How do I know if my new meter is working?

You should see a blue light on the meter indicating it is working. You can also check the online portal to monitor your energy use in near real time.

How do I read my smart meter?

EPE's online customer portal is the most effective way to monitor energy use and ensure your smart meter is working properly. Your smart meter remotely tracks energy use in near real time and sends the data to EPE through a secure communication network. Unless you see unexpected changes in your energy use, you should assume your meter is operating correctly.

Your smart meter cycles through six displays every few seconds. Two of the displays verify the meter is working properly. The rest of the displays track how much energy you are using, how much power is being returned to the grid if you have a local energy system, and your peak energy use.

Most residential customers will only need to focus on kWh delivered, which is used to calculate electric bills.

SCREEN 1: Digits light up on the display to ensure all values can be seen on the meter.

SCREEN 2: kWh delivered is the amount of energy being used. These values are used to produce electric bills.

SCREEN 3: kWh received is the amount of excess power being sent to the electric grid. This only applies to customers who have solar panels, batteries, etc., and occurs when a customer's local system produces more energy than the customer needs.

SCREEN 4: kW delivered is the highest amount of energy used during a billing cycle. This value is not reflected in

SCREEN 5: kW received is the peak amount of power returned to the electric grid during a billing cycle. This only applies to customers who have solar panels, batteries, etc., and occurs when a customer's local system produces more energy than the customer needs.

SCREEN 6: This display verifies the network connection. The values nErE9 and HAnEI are normal and do not reflect an error. They confirm the meter is functioning normally and communicating with the network.

The values **Er1**, **Er2**, **nOnEI**, **nOrAd**, and **SaFE** signal to EPE that the meter may need to be serviced.

If you have any questions about your energy use or your electric bill, contact Customer Care at customercare@epelectric.com or call 575-526-5555.

Opting Out

Can I opt out of getting a smart meter?

Yes, customers have the option to opt out. However, they should research the benefits of smart meters before deciding to opt out. Smart meters allow customers to monitor their energy use in near real time and make simple adjustments to save money and help the environment. Customers will also have the option to sign up for customized energy saving tips and bill alerts and will be able to take advantage of new programs and services.

If a customer still chooses to opt out of receiving a smart meter, they will be required to pay a one-time fee and a recurring monthly fee to maintain their current meter which does not communicate directly with EPE. It is actually more expensive to opt out of receiving a smart meter.

To opt out, contact our Customer Care Department by email at customercare@epelectric.com, EPE chat or call us at 575-526-5555.

New Mexico Opt Out Fees

Meter Choice	One-Time Fee	Monthly Recurring Fee
Keep existing meter	\$40.65	\$6.72
Replace existing meter with non-communicating meter	\$77.57	\$6.72
Replace smart meter with non-smart meter	\$105.20	\$6.72