



Smart meters and you

What is happening?

From 1 December 2017, new rules mean new and replacement electricity meters will need to be smart meters.

A smart meter gives you more options on how you use and manage your electricity and access to a wider range of energy services. This includes better and more timely electricity usage data, a wider range of electricity pricing options and access to services such as demand management.

Your retailer will choose a contractor, known as a metering coordinator, who will install and maintain your meter. This is different to what happened under the old rules where your distributor was responsible for installing and servicing your meter.

How does this affect me?

You must provide safe access

If you need a new or replacement meter, your retailer can disconnect your electricity if you deny them or their contractor safe access to your premises to install the smart meter.

Your retailer can only disconnect you in this situation if:

- they have visited your premises and have found it unsafe to install the meter
- they have given you a disconnection warning notice providing the reason why you may be disconnected, and
- you don't fix the safety issue.

You must also provide safe access to your premises where your retailer needs to test, maintain, inspect or alter the meter or check its accuracy.

Your electricity supply will be interrupted

Your electricity will be temporarily turned off to install the smart meter.

Your retailer must notify you at least four business days before this happens. They can let you know by any appropriate communication method, such as a letter, text message, email or telephone call.

The notification must tell you the expected date, time and time length that your electricity will be turned off. Retailers must also include a 24 hour telephone number for enquiries.

Your retailer must also restore your electricity as soon as possible after the installation is completed.

How can I get a smart meter?

All new and replacement meters will be smart meters. When your smart meter is installed you can ask your retailer to disable its communications functions. Be aware there may be ongoing costs associated with doing this.

1. Your retailer offers you a smart meter or a product that needs a smart meter

What are my rights? Your retailer may offer you a product that needs a smart meter installed or they may offer you a new meter as part of a new meter deployment that includes your home. If you do not want a smart meter installed at your premises, you can opt out. Your retailer must tell you about how you opt out and give you time to do so. More information is included below in 'How do I opt out if my retailer offers me a smart meter?'

2. Your meter is faulty or it has reached the end of its life

What are my rights? If your meter is not working properly or has reached the end of its life, your retailer will replace it with a smart meter.

3. You are building a new house with a new connection point

What are my rights? All new builds and new connections will have smart meters installed.

4. You would like a smart meter

Ask your retailer if they are able to install a smart meter at your property. If they cannot, you may want to shop around to see if other retailers can provide the meter.

How do I opt out if my retailer offers me a smart meter?

If your retailer offers you a smart meter when your existing meter is working properly, they must give you a chance to opt out of having the meter replaced with a smart meter. This only applies if you haven't already waived your right to opt out when signing up to your energy contract.

Your retailer must give you **two notices** to make sure you have a chance to opt out:

1. your retailer must write to you between 60 and 25 business days before they propose to replace the meter
2. they must write to you again at least 10 days after the first notice and no less than 15 business days before the proposed date to replace the meter.

In these letters, your retailer must tell you:

- that you have the option of opting out of the meter installation
- instructions on how to opt out
- the expected date and time for the meter replacement
- the last opportunity you will have to opt out, which must be no earlier than seven days before the retailer roll out
- any upfront charges you will incur
- their contact details.

The ability to opt out only applies when your retailer is rolling out smart meters as part of a new deployment. It does not apply when your retailer is replacing a meter that is faulty or has reached the end of its life.

What can I do if there is a problem?

Contact your retailer if:

- you have a problem with your meter
- you think your bill is wrong
- your electricity was disconnected and you think it was a mistake.

Your energy retailer is the business that bills you for your electricity or gas, and from 1 December they will also be responsible for your meter and can remotely read your energy meter.

Your retailer's contact details are on your energy bill. When choosing your retailer, ask them if they have a 24 hour enquiries line if this is important to you. Other retailers may have online inquiry assistance or other ways you can contact them.

Contact your distributor if:

- your electricity or gas stops working
- there is a blackout or the supply is bad
- there is a fault or emergency, for example, an electricity pole is down.

Your distributor is the business that operates the gas and electricity networks, including the electricity poles and wires and gas pipelines.

Your distributor's contact details are on your energy bill, usually under 'faults and emergencies'.

If you experience a problem with the installation or function of the smart meter or you wish to submit a complaint, follow this link for more information on what you can do: [What can I do if I have a complaint about my energy?](#)

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
23 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory 2601
© Commonwealth of Australia 2017

Important notice

The information in this publication is for general guidance only. It does not constitute legal advice or other professional advice, and should not be relied on as a statement of the law in any jurisdiction. Because it is intended only as a general guide, it may contain generalisations. You should obtain professional advice if you have any specific concern.

The ACCC has made every reasonable effort to provide current and accurate information, but it does not make any guarantees regarding the accuracy, currency or completeness of that information.

ACCC11/17_1332