

Smart meters frequently asked questions



About smart meters

Q: What is a smart meter?

A: A smart meter is an electric meter and/or natural gas meter module with two-way wireless communications between the meter and the company's secure data centers. The smart meter will securely transmit energy use and meter status data to us automatically, which allows us to bill you based on actual use, faster response if you have a power outage and better information about your energy usage.

Q: What are the differences between the smart meter and the analog meter?

A: Smart meters provide you greater convenience, more control and expanded choice in understanding and managing your energy use. Smart meters securely transmit energy use and meter status data to us automatically, which allows us to bill you based on actual use, respond faster if you have a power outage and provide you with more detailed information about your energy usage. Using our free online tool, Energy Manager, you can view your energy use day-by-day, hour-by-hour. In contrast, analog meters are mechanical, require manual readings, and offer you limited insights into your energy consumption.

Q: What are the benefits of smart meters?

A: Smart meters enable many benefits, offering greater convenience and expanded choice in understanding and managing your energy use, including:

- **Fewer estimates** — Smart meters measure hourly energy use so monthly bills are based on your actual energy use each month. No more bimonthly estimates!
- **No more customer reads** — If you provide a meter reading on the months we estimate or have an indoor or hard-to-access meter, you don't need to provide a meter reading anymore. A smart meter sends readings automatically.
- **Fewer onsite visits** — Smart meters send meter readings automatically, reducing the need for visits to homes and businesses.
- **Automated outage detection** — If you experience a power outage, your smart meter reports it automatically, allowing for faster diagnosis and quicker response.
- **Easier moving experience** — In most cases, you can start or stop your electric services without scheduling a field visit.

Q: When will I get my smart meter?

A: Smart meter upgrades began in 2022 and we expect to complete upgrades throughout the state in 2025. You'll receive more information as we get closer to installations in your community.

Q: Who will receive a smart meter?

A: All residential and most business customers in our service area will receive our new electric standard smart meters and/or natural gas modules. Some large businesses, such as mandatory hourly pricing (MHP) customers, will keep their existing meters with remote reading currently in place.

Q: Do I need to do anything?

A: If we can access your electric and/or natural gas meter(s), you do not need to be present to have your meter(s) upgraded. If we are unable to complete your upgrade, we will leave a door hanger with contact information during our visit so you can call to schedule a convenient appointment time.

Q: My meter is inside my home or business. Will you move it outside?

A: No, our new standard smart meters and natural gas meter modules will be installed in the same location as the existing meters.

Q: I have received several communications about scheduling an appointment to install my inside meter. What happens if I don't schedule an appointment?

A: We'll continue to provide the same reliable, safe delivery of energy to your home or business with your legacy meter. If you're a residential customer and we're unable to gain access to install our new standard smart meter after our visit, phone calls and mailings to your home, we will automatically enroll you in our opt-out program. A current monthly opt-out fee of \$11.56 will be included on your bill. The opt-out fee is per account and applies if you have one or more meters we were unable to upgrade. You're welcome to contact us at any time to schedule a convenient appointment time to install the standard smart meter. Once installed, we will discontinue your monthly opt-out fee and you can begin enjoying the benefits offered by your smart meter. Non-residential (business) customers are not eligible to opt out of the smart meter upgrade.

Q: I don't want a smart meter. What options do I have?

A: Smart meters provide many benefits, and we'd encourage you to review some of the information we have available if you still have questions. However, if you are a residential customer and would like to opt out of having a smart meter, you certainly can. Our monthly opt-out fee to keep a legacy meter is \$11.56 currently and subject to change in the future. The opt-out fee is per account and applies if you have one or more meters we were unable to upgrade. You can change your mind at any time and request a smart meter. Once installed, we will discontinue your monthly opt-out fee. Simply contact us at 866.734.3821 if you'd like to opt out. If you are a business customer, this is a required upgrade.

Q: Who will be performing the meter upgrades and replacements?

A: We've partnered with Grid One Solutions, LaBella Associates and Bermex to upgrade and replace meters. Our qualified technicians and experienced contractor partners all carry photo ID, and vehicles are marked with our company logos for easy identification.

Q: When will you be upgrading meters in my neighborhood?

A: You can view our smart meter installation map or use our lookup tool to search by your address to find out when your meters will be upgraded. We will also mail you a postcard before we plan to begin upgrades in your neighborhood. A few days before your upgrade, we'll also remind you with an automated phone call.

Q: What does the natural gas meter upgrade process entail?

A: The natural gas meter upgrade process includes:

- An inspection of the existing meter
- The addition of a module that allows communication with our network
- A required inside line inspection if your gas meter is located inside
- Possible replacement of a small number of gas meters

Q: What does the electric meter upgrade process entail?

A: The electric meter upgrade process includes:

- Removal of the legacy meter and inspection of the meter box
- Installation of the smart meter
- Documenting old and new meter numbers and readings

Q: How long will the upgrade/replacement take, and will my service be interrupted?

A: Our work takes just minutes:

- **For gas meter** upgrades, most of the time, service will not be interrupted.
- **For electric meter** upgrades, service may be briefly interrupted.

Q: What days of the week will installations be performed?

A: We will be completing upgrades Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and we may complete some on Saturdays, if needed.

Q: Will I lose power when my electric meter is upgraded?

A: Yes, electric meter upgrades will include a brief power interruption. We will mail a postcard a few weeks in advance of your meter upgrade and call a few days before your upgrade, so you're able to plan for our visit. When we arrive, we'll knock before beginning the installation. If we don't reach you during our visit, we'll leave a door hanger confirming your smart meter has been installed or notifying you if we encountered any issues and providing contact information for follow-up. For some larger commercial customers, we will attempt to schedule appointments to minimize impact on your operation. If we are unable to complete the upgrade of your meter(s), we will leave a door hanger with contact information during our visit so you can call to schedule a convenient appointment time.

Q: What do I need to do to prepare?

A: Please have the area around the meter clear to provide access and sufficient space for our technician to work safely. If you have a pet, please secure them away from the meter in a separate area of your home. If your meter is located indoors or is not easily accessible, our technician will require access to the meter.

Q: Where can I find out more information?

A: Fact sheets, FAQs, videos and other information about smart meters and the upgrade process can be found at rge.com/smartmeters.

Other information

Q: Will RG&E turn off my service without notice?

A: No, we'll continue to follow the same procedures we do today. We bill energy use for the previous month and provide 23 days for payment to be made. If you miss a payment, we'll mail you a notice to remind you of the overdue payment and when you might be at risk of interruption if payment is not received.

Q: Do I still call you if I experience a power outage?

A: Your smart meter will tell us about an outage automatically, once your neighborhood updates are completed. You are also still able to report your outage online or on the app or by calling us.

Q: Who owns the electric and/or natural gas meter on my house or business?

A: We own the electric meter and from the electric line attachment at the building to the pole. We own the natural gas meter and natural gas pipe that runs from the street to the meter. The property owner owns the meter enclosure box, electric line attachment at the building, and all of the electric wiring and/or natural gas piping in their home or business.

Q: Can they turn off service without sending a truck to my home or business?

A: Yes, for nearly all of our customers, smart meters will allow us to turn electric service on and off using this technology in the future. Normal collection procedures will not change. For your safety, we strongly recommend the main breaker be turned off prior to any reconnection of service. Electric appliances that may have been left on will resume operation once the electric service is turned on. Natural gas service will still require a visit to the property to turn the service on and off and to relight at least one natural gas appliance and perform a safety check.

Q: Will my rate change with a new smart meter?

A: No, your pricing option will remain the same as today and you will continue to be billed on the same rate. For example if you have a time-of-use service, you can still take advantage of off-peak pricing.

Q: Will the new smart meter work with my solar panels?

A: Yes, our smart meters are built with the latest technology and have all of the features of your old legacy meter and much more. The bidirectional capability you have now will be automatically programmed into your new meter.

Q: I have a smart thermostat. Will you use the smart meter to adjust the settings on my thermostat or control any other appliances in my house?

A: Smart meters only record the whole house energy use, they cannot control individual appliances. If you have a Wi-Fi-enabled thermostat and have signed up for our Smart Savings Rewards program, we would adjust your thermostat during events the same way we do today.

Q: I'm billed every other month currently. Will a smart meter impact my billing?

A: Yes, you will be billed monthly once your smart meter is installed and we have completed the neighborhood upgrades.

Q: I'm enrolled in meter read alerts currently. Will you automatically remove me from this program after my smart meter is installed?

A: Yes, after your smart meter is installed and we've completed upgrades in your area we will remove you from our meter-reading program and meter read alerts. You can also update your preferences at any time by visiting rge.com/MyAccount to update the alerts you'd like to receive.

Q: My meter currently turns my water heater or heating system on and off to take advantage of off-peak times. Will I see any changes with a smart meter?

A: Yes, your meter can no longer manage appliances with a timer. However, our qualified installers will work with you to install an appropriate timer so that you can continue to take advantage of off-peak times with your larger electric appliances.

Q: With a smart meter, will you still have to schedule onsite visits when I move in or move out to start or stop the electric service?

A: In most cases, you can start or stop your electric service without scheduling a field visit.

Q: Is a smart meter compatible with homes with older wiring?

A: A smart meter does not impose any additional burden to the existing meter enclosure or house wiring. The meter installer has been trained to inspect your meter enclosure for any potential equipment concerns. This process could potentially uncover problems that otherwise would go unnoticed. This step was incorporated into our installation process as a safety precaution for you and our installers.

Understanding energy use

Q: How do I access my energy use information?

A: Our free online tool, Energy Manager, will provide you secure access to your energy use. Simply log into My Account to view your energy use details through Energy Manager. After your smart meter is installed and upgrades are completed in your neighborhood, you'll be able to view energy use day-by-day, hour-by-hour. If you don't have a My Account set up yet, visit rge.com/MyAccount to get started. Registering is easy and only takes a few minutes to get set up.

Q: How much detail about energy use will be available online?

A: Once a smart meter is installed and upgrades are completed in your area, you will have access to your energy use down to the hour.

Q: Does the smart meter capture usage when equipment is plugged in? How much?

A: Both legacy and smart meters measure total home energy usage. They only record the actual energy consumed by devices. For example, if you have a computer plugged in but are not using it, your meter will not record significant energy usage because the computer is not drawing much power in standby mode.

Q: Does the smart meter record usage as though equipment is in use, even though it is only plugged in?

A: No, both legacy and smart meters only capture total home energy usage. Some devices—such as TVs, computers, or microwaves—use a minimal amount of energy when they are off or in standby mode. Your meter will only ever record the actual amount of energy being used by an appliance or device. For example, if you have a microwave plugged in but are not using it, your meter will only record the small amount of standby power it uses to power its digital clock, not the higher usage it would record if you were actively microwaving food.

Network and data security

Q: Will my energy use data be secure?

A: We take protecting critical infrastructure and the data and information entrusted to us very seriously. We have implemented policies and controls, based on proven security best practices, that specifically address protecting data/information in transit (to and from the meter and our systems) and at rest. Multifactor authentication and strictly enforced password requirements prevent unauthorized access to your information and any equipment in your home or business.

Q: Do you sell customer data to other companies?

A: We do not sell customer data. You will have free access to your data through our online Energy Manager tool. In the future, you will have the option to easily and securely share your energy use data with third parties you authorize who may be able to provide further insights and recommendations that can help you save energy.

Health and safety

Q: Are smart meters safe?

A: Yes. The RG&E smart meter installation plan was approved by the New York State Public Service Commission in 2020. With that approval comes an understanding that the radio-frequency energy emitted by smart meters is well below limits set by the Federal Communications Commission and following in-depth review of studies by the World Health Organization that states the very small amount of RF

produced by smart meters is not harmful to human health. The FCC also sets RF exposure limits for other household devices used every day, including televisions, Wi-Fi routers and cell phones. All those devices—which are also well under FCC RF exposure limits—have higher RF levels than smart meters and are used more frequently, for longer durations, and in closer proximity to our bodies.

¹The term "standards" refers to exposure limits recommended by scientific or health organizations that have reviewed and evaluated the relevant scientific research.

²The organization now includes the National Radiological Protection Board in the U.K. that formerly had responsibility for providing information and recommendations about radio-frequency fields and electromagnetic fields at other frequencies, as well as ionizing radiation sources.