

Frequently Asked Questions About Smart Meters

Think twice whenever you are considering sharing personal information about yourself—including your smart meter data—with a marketer or third party.

Who might ask for my smart meter data?

Alternative electricity suppliers, who sell electricity to compete with your utility, might request your smart meter data.

What will an alternative supplier do with my smart meter data?

If you share your smart meter data with an alternative supplier, that supplier may send you mail advertisements, call or visit you at home to sell their product.

What information would an alternative supplier receive?

If you authorize the utility to share your information, the supplier will receive your name, account number, contact information and smart meter data for the past two years and two future years.

Do I have to share my smart meter data if I want to buy electricity from an alternative supplier?

No. You can enroll with an alternative supplier without sharing your smart meter data. To determine whether purchasing electricity from an alternative supplier is right for you, see the Attorney General's pamphlet titled "Choosing a Natural Gas or Electricity Supplier."

Can I change my mind after I have agreed to share my data?

Yes. You may revoke your authorization at any time.



LISA MADIGAN
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL

For more information about smart meters and collection of smart meter data, contact your utility:

ComEd: 1-800-334-7661
Ameren: 1-800-755-5000

To learn more about public utilities, please visit:

[www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/
consumers/public_utilities.html](http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/consumers/public_utilities.html)

or call Attorney General Lisa Madigan's
Consumer Fraud Bureau:

CHICAGO
1-800-386-5438
TTY: 1-800-964-3013

SPRINGFIELD
1-800-243-0618
TTY: 1-877-844-5461

CARBONDALE
1-800-243-0607
TTY: 1-877-675-9339

Spanish Language Toll-Free Hotline:
1-866-310-8398

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois.
This material is available in alternate format upon request.

GET SMART ABOUT SMART METERS



LISA MADIGAN
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL

What is a smart meter?

A smart meter is a wireless device that records how much electricity you use during short intervals and electronically transmits that information directly to the utility so it can calculate your bill. Smart meters replace existing analog meters that record electricity usage on a monthly basis and must be read manually.

Illinois utilities are in the process of replacing analog electricity meters with smart meters at customers' homes throughout Illinois.

Once a smart meter has been installed, your service should continue as usual. There will be no change in your billing or maintenance or the utility's emergency response. For more information about when a smart meter will be installed at your home, contact your local utility.

Your utility should notify you when your smart meter will be installed. A smart meter looks like a digital clock, displaying the amount of electricity you have used. An analog meter looks like a traditional clock with spinning dials.



Traditional Meter



Smart Meter

Having a smart meter does not—on its own—lower your electricity usage or your electricity bill. Smart meters are simply a new way to measure the electricity you use. The data provided by a smart meter may enable you to sign up for programs that lower your energy costs, but only if you take the time to monitor your energy usage and change your energy habits.

Smart Meter Data—Think Twice About Sharing It

1. Your smart meter records how much electricity you use during intervals as short as 30 minutes.
2. Alternative electricity suppliers, who sell electricity supply to utility customers, can use information collected by smart meters to market services to you.
3. Smart meter data can reveal sensitive details about your life. Spikes in electricity use may indicate when you are home, while low use may indicate you are not at home.
4. Your utility is not allowed to share your smart meter data with alternative suppliers or other third parties unless you sign an authorization to do so.
5. Only sign an authorization form if you are comfortable sharing your name, account number and electricity data. Know how to cancel your authorization if you change your mind.
6. If you share your smart meter data with alternative suppliers, you may receive mail or phone call solicitations from those suppliers.
7. Alternative electricity suppliers will not necessarily save you money. Any offers should be carefully considered before enrolling.
8. **It is entirely up to you whether you provide smart meter data to any third party.**

Can I save energy or money with a smart meter?

Having a smart meter does not lower your electricity usage or bill. A smart meter provides more detailed information about your electricity usage patterns; however, this data can only lower your electricity costs if you learn how to read the data, take time to monitor your electricity usage and change your energy usage habits.

Your electricity supplier may offer real-time pricing plans that charge different electricity prices throughout the day based on demand. If more people use electricity at one time ("peak times"), the price paid by real-time pricing customers will go up. Participants in real-time pricing plans who change how they use their electricity and shift their use away from peak times to cheaper times of day may be able to save money. But if they cannot change their habits, they may end up paying more.

Utilities may also offer a peak time savings credit to customers with a smart meter. Customers who sign up for this program volunteer to reduce their electricity usage during high demand times, and if they reduce their usage, they save money on their electricity bills.