

This Fact Sheet explains smart meters.

Read this Fact Sheet if you want to know:

- what a smart meter is
- benefits of smart meters
- whether you need a smart meter
- smart meters and your health.



New meters are smart meters

As of 1 December 2017, all new and replacement electricity meters installed in South Australian homes and small businesses are smart meters.

Some suppliers may allow you to switch to a smart meter even if your current meter is working well.

A smart meter is a digital electricity meter that records your electricity use sends the usage data to your electricity supplier through the internet.

Under the new rules, your electricity supplier will appoint a metering co-ordinator to install and maintain your meter. Previously SA Power Networks was responsible for installing and servicing meters. The responsibility is now on the electricity retailers.

Benefits of smart meters

A smart meter provides more options for managing your electricity and accessing a wide range of services.

It can help you to:

- get accurate and up-to-date information about your electricity usage
- monitor your electricity usage
- change your patterns of use to reduce your electricity bills
- remotely control appliances that use electricity, such as air conditioners
- get connected and switch suppliers or electricity contracts more quickly
- receive fewer estimated bills.

Smart meters may also allow new pricing structures to be created with varying tariffs according to the time of day electricity is used. You can choose an electricity contract which rewards you for using electricity during the lower-

priced off-peak periods instead of the high-priced peak periods.

Do I have to have a smart meter?

Under the new rules, all new and replacement meters will be smart meters.

However, if your existing meter is working properly, your electricity supplier cannot force you to have a smart meter installed, even if you are moving to a new plan. You can retain your meter until it reaches the end of its life. Be aware that some plans may require you to waive the right to opt out of having a smart meter installed.

Also, when your smart meter is installed you can ask your supplier to disable its communications functions. Be aware there may be on-going costs associated with doing that.

How do I opt out?

When a supplier offers you a new contract, it must include an option for you to opt out of having a smart meter.

You should receive two written notices to make sure you have a chance to opt out:

- The first notice to be given between 60 and 25 business days before the supplier proposes to replace the meter.
- The second notice must be given at least 10 days after the first notice and at least 15 business days before the proposed date to replace the meter.
- about any upfront fees they will charge you
- their contact details.

You can only opt out if you haven't already waived your right to opt out when accepting your energy contract.

The two notices must tell you:

- that you have the choice to opt out of installing a smart meter
- how to opt out
- the expected date and time for the meter replacement
- the last date you will have to opt out, which must be no earlier than seven days before your supplier wants to install the new meter

What happens when a smart meter is installed?

You must provide safe access

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

Your supplier can only disconnect you in this situation if:

- its contractor has visited your premises and found it unsafe to install the meter
- it has sent you a disconnection warning notice telling you why you may be disconnected, and
- you don't fix the safety issue.

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

Your electricity supply will be interrupted

Your supplier will need to turn off your electricity temporarily to install the smart meter.

Your supplier must notify you at least four business days before turning off your electricity.

They can either write you a letter, send you a text message or email or call you.

They must tell you the date and time they expect to install the meter and for how long your electricity will be turned off. Suppliers must also include a 24-hour telephone number for enquiries.

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

Smart meters and your health

Smart meters are a form of wireless technology. You may have concerns about the effects of radio waves from the meters. You can find more information on the ARPANSA website at www.arpansa.gov.au.

For further technical advice about smart meters, visit the South Australian Office of the Technical Regulator's website:

http://energymining.sa.gov.au/energy_and_technical_regulation/office_of_the_technical_regulator.

For more information about smart meters, visit the South Australian Government website:

www.sa.gov.au/topics/energy-and-environment/meters-and-bills/smart-meters

You can also contact your electricity supplier for information.

For hardware issues associated with a smart meter, it may be necessary to speak to Consumer and Business Services (Phone: 131 882; Postal address: GPO Box 1719 Adelaide SA 5001; Website: <http://www.cbs.sa.gov.au/contact-us/>).

Other considerations

When a smart meter is installed, your energy supplier (retailer) is responsible for the meter and for reading it, which may be done without anyone physically attending your property.

Your supplier's contact details are on your energy bill.

Contact your supplier if:

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

SA Power Networks is still the distributor for the electricity network in South Australia so even if you have a smart meter you should contact SA Power Networks if

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

You can contact SA Power Networks at 13 12 61.