

Switch to Radio Frequency Meters Brings Benefits

Your electric cooperative has been working hard over the past year and a half to replace our current Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) meters to Radio Frequency (RF) meters. We currently have around 3,000 RF meters in place.

RF meters operate by transmitting and receiving information wire-

lessly and are just one of the ways electric utilities, like ours, are bringing their systems into the 21st century. This new advanced metering system will improve reliability and efficiency, enable the increased integration of renewable energy resources, provide more frequent meter readings throughout the day, and provide more timely

information regarding outages.

As with every new technology, myths soon follow which typically lead to misunderstanding of how the technology works. The following are the most commonly circulated advanced meter myths. Our responses, each supported by research, offer the facts. ■

Myths vs. Facts: The Truth about Advanced Meters

Myth #1

Advanced meters are less accurate than analog meters.

TRUTH: Advanced meters are rigorously tested for accuracy even before they leave the manufacturing plant. All meter manufacturers must follow performance standards set by the American National Standards Institute. JREC also performs accuracy tests.

Myth #2

Advanced meters are a health threat because they communicate using wireless signals.

TRUTH: In-depth review of the scientific literature by the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that the small amount of radio frequency (RF) energy produced by advanced meters is not harmful to human health.

TRUTH: RF emitted by advanced meters is well below the limits set by Federal Communication Commission and below levels produced by other common household devices like cell phones, baby monitors, satellite TVs, and microwaves. In fact, you would have to be exposed to the RF from an advanced meter for 375 years to get a dose equivalent to that of one year of 15-minutes-per-day cell phone use.

No credible evidence shows any threat to human health from RF emissions at or below RF exposure limits developed by the FCC. With over 25,000 articles published on the topic over the last 30 years, scientific knowledge in this area is now more extensive than for most chemicals.

Myth #3

Advanced meters will not keep my data secure.

TRUTH: The utility industry is poised to use advanced security and encryption technology to safeguard your data. Utilities are involved in national consortiums and work with national cyber-security to regularly audit their systems to ensure privacy and security of advanced meters. The privacy of your data is protected now. Utilities work constantly to safeguard it. That will not change with the use of advanced meters.

Myth #4

Advanced meters are hazardous, increasing the risk of fire and explosion.

TRUTH: These meters must meet requirements and standards spelled out in the National Electric Safety Code. Public Service Commission's require independent certification proving that advanced meters are safe and show resistance to heat, fire, voltages, surges, and self-heating.

Myth #5

Advanced meters are an invasion of privacy.

TRUTH: These meters show how much energy you use, based on time of day, not how you use the energy. Utilities adhere to strict policies, following state laws that regulate the use of personal information for business functions like billing and customer service.

Myth #6

Advanced meters do not provide any consumer benefits.

TRUTH: No more estimated bills, because now with advanced meters we can provide you with near-real-time energy usage information. This helps us greatly as we work with you to resolve any usage questions.

TRUTH: Advanced meters improve power outage detection and notification as they electronically report the location of outages, making restoration faster and status notification to you much easier.

Greater reliability, faster power restoration, convenience, and more information regarding your usage are just a few of the many benefits of advanced meters. Separating myths from reality allows you to take advantage of all the benefits that an advanced, more modernized electric grid offers. It's important to stay informed and learn about the different ways your utility is deploying the advanced grid and advanced meters to improve your electric service.—Source: *Smart Grid Consumer Collaborative (SGCC)*