

Smart meters



Utilities Disputes is here to help with questions or complaints about electricity, gas, water, or broadband installation on shared property. Our service is free, independent, and fair.

A **smart meter**, or **advanced meter**, collects and stores data about your electricity use and sends this data to the meter owner. Most smart meters record electricity use in half-hour periods and send the data once a day.

Meters, including smart meters, are usually owned by electricity providers or meter equipment providers.

What is a smart meter?

Rules about installing smart meters



When installing a smart meter, electricity providers must comply with government and local council rules as well as their own terms and conditions.

No government requirement to install a smart meter

There is no government requirement to install smart meters. However, the government does require meters to be recertified. Many providers choose to install smart meters instead of recertifying old meters.

Resource consent

Some local councils require the provider to have a resource consent to install a smart meter.

Some providers require customers to have a smart meter

Some providers require customers to have a smart meter. If so, this requirement will be in the provider's terms and conditions. If you do not want a smart meter, you may have to switch to a different provider.

Notice requirements

Providers must comply with their own terms and conditions about giving notice before installing a smart meter.

The minimum notice a provider should give, unless otherwise agreed, is 10 working days. The provider should send the notice to the customer by name.

If the electricity needs to be turned off, the provider should also tell the customer to turn off appliances that could be damaged by surges.

Rules about privacy



Providers must comply with the Privacy Act 1993 when storing and using data from a smart meter.

Your provider should:

- say why it is collecting the data
- say how it will use the data
- keep the data secure
- only use the data for the purposes the provider said it will use the data for.

How we consider health concerns



Some people have concerns about how smart meters may affect their health. Concerns may be about the radiofrequency energy (RF) or electromagnetic frequency (EMF) a smart meter emits when collecting or sending data.

Smart meters must comply with maximum exposure limits set out in New Zealand Standard 2772.1:1999 for exposures to radiofrequency fields.

When we consider concerns about the health effects of RF or EMF, we check the model of the smart meter has been tested and complies with the New Zealand Standard.

We will not usually investigate further unless evidence shows:

- someone living at the property has unusual sensitivity to RF or EMF; or
- the meter does not meet the New Zealand Standard.

Further resources

The Electricity Authority has smart meter information on its website ea.govt.nz



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