

Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)?**

AMI is a technology solution that allows two-way communication between electric, gas and water meters and Deshler Municipal Utilities (DMU). In the future, this two-way network will also be used to communicate with other devices on DMU's electric, gas and water distribution systems, thus providing a greater level of information about the status of those systems.

- **What is an Advanced Meter?**

Advanced Meters allow for two-way communication on an Advanced Metering network. The meters collect usage data in increments. DMU will configure electric meters to collect usage in 15-minute increments, and gas and water meters to collect in hourly increments. The electric meters will also collect incremental data on voltage, current and conditions. The meters then transmit the data to the Utility Offices via the two-way network. Additionally, DMU's personnel can remotely communicate with the meters to get current reads, check status, and disconnect and reconnect electric power.

- **Is Advanced Metering new technology?**

No, Advanced Metering has been around for many years and is implemented at millions of homes and businesses across the United States. Advanced Metering is already implemented at many of the utilities that surround the DMU service territory.

- **When will Advanced Meters be installed at my home or business?**

DMU will be installing Advanced Meters over the course of several months. Current plans are to perform installations from December 2020 through March 2021; however, this pace can change for a variety of factors.

- **Will I be notified prior to any meter installations at my home or business?**

On the day of installation, a uniformed DMU electric employee will knock on your door to inform you before any installation. A door hanger will be left on your door notifying you of a scheduled installation time if you are not home.

- **Will the new Advanced Electric Meter fit in my existing meter socket? What if the socket is damaged?**

Yes, the Advanced Electric Meters we are purchasing will fit your existing meter socket. The swap is very easy and quick. During installation, DMU personnel will carefully inspect your meter socket for damage. If it is determined that the meter socket is in need of repair, we will contact the homeowner to make arrangements for repair. Repair of the meter socket is the responsibility and cost borne by the customer.

- **Will my service be interrupted during installations?**

Yes, for the electric meter there will be a brief outage of power while the meter is exchanged.

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- **If I have questions about AMI, how do I get those answered?**

- You may email DMU with your AMI questions to: kbehrman@deshler.org.
- For AMI-specific questions, you may also call 419-966-4270.

- **How does Advanced Metering benefit me?**

At a high level, Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) will provide you with better information to utilize your utility resources more efficiently. With Advanced Metering, DMU will be able to provide a higher level of customer service; offer better electric, gas and water reliability; and keep our operating costs low. The additional and timelier information available through AMI will enable us to better address customer questions and issues. That same information will give DMU electric department a view of what is happening throughout the various distribution systems, thus enabling us to be more proactive and avoid outages or other system issues. Many functions that require sending crews out to the field today will be performed remotely with AMI, thus saving labor, fuel and vehicle costs, in addition to being more environmentally friendly.

Below is a short list of benefits related to Advanced Metering:

- Outage notification (Utility Staff)
- Power quality reliability
- Quicker water leak detection
- Reduction of vehicle emissions (meter reader vehicles)
- Future ability for renewable resources (current solar energy program)
- Identification of theft (keeps costs low)
- Identification of water leaks or trouble shooting excessive usage
- Customer privacy – no meter reader on premise

- **What will Advanced Metering cost me?**

There will be no additional customer bill charges for this new technology. The project is being funded out of normal operating budgets. As DMU realizes financial benefits, those savings will also be used to fund this project.

- **Will I have access to my meter data?**

At this time DMU will not have this function available. This is something that could be added once all of the new AMI meters are deployed.

- **Will anyone else have access to my meter data?**

Just like today, the account owner and DMU will be the only ones with access to your usage data.

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- **Will Deshler Municipal Utilities be able to control anything in my home or business?**

No. DMU has designed our Advanced Metering system such that our access stops at the meter. We have no intention of offering programs to control consumer devices in the home. If, in the future, it makes sense to offer such programs, they would be on a voluntary basis by each individual customer. Such programs can be financially beneficial to customers, but have to be signed up for by the customer. At no time would DMU be able to control or monitor anything in the customer's home or business without the customer's permission, knowledge and installation of additional specialized equipment.

- **Will I still need to call when my power is out?**

Initially, we are asking customers to still call in (1-888-267-5079) to report outages, even with an Advanced Electric Meter installed at their home or business. As we deploy the Advanced Metering system, we will be testing many aspects to ensure the communication is flowing efficiently and effectively, as it relates to outage notification.

- **How does all of this work?**

Water and gas meters communicate with nearby electric meters. The electric meters can communicate with other nearby electric meters and ultimately with a collection point, which creates what is called a mesh network. The mesh network is very redundant, resilient, and self-healing. Water and gas meters will transmit data to the electric meters once every 4 hours sending hourly intervals. Electric meters transmit their data every hour back to the database.

- **What if I don't want an Advanced Meter?**

DMU would request you to contact us at 419-278-1831 to discuss your concerns and options. We want to ensure you have the best possible information prior to making this decision.

DMU does have a mechanism to allow customers to Opt-Out of the Advanced Metering program, under certain circumstances. Customers choosing this option will forego all the benefits associated with this technology, including valuable usage information, automatic outage notification, better utility problem resolution, etc.

For those who chose to Opt-Out of this program, please contact the Utility Office for more information. An application needs to be completed and there will be a one-time analog meter charge and a recurring monthly meter reading fee. Please contact the Utility Office for more information.