AMI FAQ's

What is an AMI meter?

AMI stands for Automated Metering Infrastructure. It is an electrical meter that records the consumption of electricity and sends that information back to KPUB. These meters differ from traditional meters because there is a wireless module installed in the meter which allows for two-way wireless communication (much like a cell phone) between the meter and KPUB. The AMI meters collect usage data electronically daily as opposed to a monthly reading by a meter reader. The AMI meter transmits these readings remotely over a private, secure wireless radio network.

Why are the traditional meters being replaced?

AMI meters represent a significant improvement over previous metering technology. These AMI meters will allow KPUB to have better billing and consumption data.

Benefits include:

- *Improved Efficiency* – reading all meters, residential and commercial, remotely will be more cost effective than having KPUB personnel drive to remote locations monthly.
- *Improved Reliability* – Having a two-way communication with the AMI meters will enhance KPUB's outage management system by proactively determining outage locations.
- *Improved Power Quality* - The AMI system will report variances in voltage and other line conditions that will help KPUB maintain a more reliable power distribution system.
- *Improved Customer Service* – The AMI system will allow KPUB to offer our customers more timely information regarding their energy consumption, which will help customers make wise decisions about how they use energy in their homes.

Will customer account and usage information remain secure and confidential?

Yes, KPUB maintains strong data privacy practices as a normal course of doing business and has a high regard for customer privacy. The data collected from the meter is the meter's ID number, electric usage, and operational system characteristics. We collect and use the meter information internally for business purposes such as billing, starting and stopping service, and detecting usage on an inactive account.

KPUB cannot monitor appliance usage from the collected information. KPUB does not disclose individual energy usage data to any third party without written consent from the customer (unless there is a court order or subpoena).

The operational system characteristics measure voltage and power factor so we can use our engineering model to determine delivery efficiency and reduce system losses. We also use meter data to evaluate transformers, perform capacity planning, and provide customers with services for monitoring their own usage through SmartHub.

Do AMI meters use radio frequency communications? Is it safe?

Yes. Research conducted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Electric Power Research Institute, the Utilities Telecom Council and others have found no negative health impacts from AMI meters that send information via a wireless communications network. The radio frequencies (RF) emitted by AMI meters fall well below the maximum recommended in federal guidelines.

People are continuously exposed to very low levels of natural and man-made radio frequency fields, or RF. Even the earth's surface and the human body are constant sources of RF fields. AMI meters send information about home electricity use to KPUB by RF signals. KPUB's meters emit RF similar to that of many common household devices such as baby monitors, cordless phones, and remote-controlled toys.

The exposure from the new meters is much lower than other common sources for two reasons: 1) infrequent signal transmission, and 2) distance. On a daily basis, the utility's meters emit power for less than 30 seconds per day. In addition, these meters are placed outdoors, with a wall separating the meter from the living space. This combination of placement and infrequent operation means that if you were within one foot of a transmitting meter you would be exposed to less energy than when using an active microwave or cell phone next to your ear. You can rest assured our new metering equipment is safe for you and your family.

Will the communications system interfere with home equipment?

All communications equipment used for AMI meets criteria set by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The AMI meter and system operates on an unlicensed frequency band and through spread spectrum technology avoids interfering with any equipment inside a home or business.

Will a meter reader still need to visit to read the meter?

KPUB staff will not be on site to read meters monthly but will continue to need access to the meter for periodic safety and quality assurance testing as well as inspections and maintenance.

Have the meters been tested for accuracy?

Yes. The accuracy of the equipment used by the AMI meter manufacturer conforms to standards set by the National Electric Manufacturers Association (NEMA) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

Do I own the meter?

No. The AMI meter is owned by KPUB, just as it is today.

Can I purchase and install or remove my own meter?

No. It is illegal and unsafe to do so. KPUB owns and maintains the metering equipment. Removing or tampering with KPUB property creates a safety issue, which may result in termination of service, and is considered a crime. If done improperly it can result in serious injury or death.

Can a customer opt-out of receiving the AMI meter?

Yes. All customers will receive a new AMI meter. Customers who choose to opt out will be required to sign an Opt Out Acknowledgement form. The meters at the locations for customers that have chosen to opt out will have a digital meter that does not have any radio transmission ability, and does not perform interval readings.

If a customer chooses to opt out of having the meter installed, there will be a $20.00 monthly meter reading fee added to the bill to cover the costs of having to physically read the meter each month.

How often will meter data be collected?

Meter data is collected in 15 minute intervals.

Will I lose electrical service during the installation?

Yes, for no more than a few minutes. You will need to reset electronic clocks and other devices. The meter installer will attempt to notify you before they turn off the power. If you are not present, the technician will leave a door hanger to notify you of a successful upgrade or if the replacement needs to be rescheduled.

Who will be changing out the meters?

KPUB is contracting with Allegiant Utility Services to exchange the meters. Their employees and vehicles will have KPUB identification so that our customers will know they are acting on behalf of KPUB.

What day of the month will the meters be read?

All of the new meters can be read daily and billed on the same schedule as before.

What if my bill reports more kWh usage than normal or I think my meter is not working correctly?

Contact KPUB's Customer Service Department at 1-830-257-3050 or custserv@kpub.com to discuss your billing concerns. Electronic meters are more accurate than analog or mechanical meters. Each new meter installed has been tested and meet American National Standards Institute (ANSI) regulations. The new meters allow for timely, accurate readings and a consistent billing period.

Can KPUB remotely disconnect electric service using the new meters?

Yes, most residential meters will have remote disconnect capabilities.

Will I keep the same rate after the conversion?

Yes, customers will continue to stay on the same rate class as they have in the past.

Can the smart meter control my appliances?

No, KPUB's AMI meters cannot be used to control your appliances. Like KPUB's basic digital meters, they measure whole-house energy use.

Once KPUB employees no longer need to read the meter, can obstacles be constructed that may make the meter inaccessible?

No. Reasonable access to equipment still must be maintained. This allows for KPUB personnel to either read or maintain the meter if necessary at reasonable times or to confirm power restoration after an outage.

Will someone other than KPUB be able to read the new meter?

The KPUB AMI System utilizes a licensed, banking data quality encrypted 900MHZ frequency band system to transmit meter data from the meter to KPUB, so it is extremely secure from unauthorized access. Access can only be provided with equipment operated by KPUB with uniquely generated license keys. Our goal is to upgrade our electric distribution system to make it safer, more secure, and more reliable. Your new AMI meter is part of this effort. Once your new AMI meter is installed, KPUB will be able to tell if someone "tampers" with your meter because the meter will report any tampering attempts to KPUB.

How secure will the new meters be?

The meter display is visible for customers to be able to check their consumption, just like the old ones. All other information and data stored in the meter is secure and the meter is sealed. Data stored inside the meter is usage and location data only. No personal information (i.e. Customer's information) is stored inside of a meter or transmitted by the meter. Billing information is stored in a separate system where readings are imported.

Will KPUB continue to do service inspections?

Routine inspections of the distribution system including meters will continue in order to look for safety hazards, meter tampering or other problems.

Will the new meter notify KPUB when the power goes out?

Yes. The new AMI meters are capable of initiating two-way communications. This means that the meter can report outages and voltage variances, as well as other line conditions, without being prompted from our offices. However, KPUB still recommends that you report your own outages by phone for extra insurance that your outage is documented.