



# Smart meters

## Frequently Asked Questions



### About smart meters

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#### Q: What is a smart meter?

**A:** A smart meter is an electric meter and/or natural gas meter module with two-way wireless communications between the meter and our systems. The smart meter will securely transmit usage and meter status data to us automatically, which enables monthly bills to be based on actual use, faster response if you experience a power outage and better control over your energy bills.

#### Q: What are the benefits of smart meters?

**A:** Smart meters enable many benefits, offering greater convenience, more control and expanded choice in understanding and managing your energy use, including:

- **Fewer estimates** — Smart meters measure detailed hourly energy use so monthly bills are based on your actual energy use each month.
- **No more customer reads** — If you provide a meter reading on the months we estimate or have an indoor or difficult-to-access meter, you don't need to provide a meter reading. A smart meter does it automatically.
- **Fewer onsite visits** — Smart meters send meter readings automatically, reducing the need for visits to homes and businesses for regular readings.
- **Faster outage response** — Two-way communication allows for faster diagnosis and quicker response by pinpointing outages based on smart meter status.
- **Makes moving even easier** — With faster access to your electricity service when you need it and stopping service when you don't.

#### Q: When will I get my smart meter?

**A:** Smart meter installations will begin this year and we expect to complete installations in 2025. You'll receive information about your installation as we get closer to installations in your community.

#### Q: Who will receive a smart meter?

**A:** All residential and business customers in our service area will receive our new electric standard smart meter and/or natural gas module. Customers in our Energy Smart Community pilot will also receive a new smart meter as we build our new communications network. Some large businesses, such as mandatory hourly pricing (MHP) customers, will keep their existing meters with remote reading currently in place.

#### Q: How will I know when my smart meter has been installed?

**A:** Our installers will knock when they arrive before starting the installation process. We will leave a door hanger confirming your new standard smart meter has been installed the day we install it.

#### Q: Do I need to do anything?

**A:** If we can access your electric and/or natural gas meter(s), you do not need to be present to have your meter(s) installed. If we are unable to access your meter(s), we will leave a door hanger with contact information during our visit so you can call to schedule a convenient appointment time.

#### Q: My meter is inside my home or business. Will you move it outside?

**A:** Our new standard smart meters will replace the existing electric meter, while a module will be added to the existing natural gas meters to enable communication with our network. Meters will remain in the same location.

#### Q: I have received several communications about scheduling an appointment to install my inside meter. What happens if I do nothing?

**A:** We'll continue to provide the same reliable, safe delivery of energy to your home or business with your legacy meter. If we're unable to gain access to install our new standard smart meter after several visits, phone calls and mailings to your home or business, we will automatically enroll you in our opt-out program. A monthly meter reading fee of \$13.47 for NYSEG and \$11.56 for RG&E will be applied to your account. You're welcome to contact us at any time and schedule a convenient appointment time to install the standard smart meter. Once installed, we will discontinue your monthly meter reading fee and you can begin enjoying the benefits powered by your smart meter.

#### Q: I don't want a standard smart meter. What options do I have?

**A:** Smart meters provide many benefits, and we'd encourage you to review some of the information we have available if you still have questions. However, if you would like to opt out of our new standard smart meters you certainly can. Our monthly meter reading fee for a legacy meter is \$13.47 for NYSEG and \$11.56 for RG&E. You can change your mind at any time and request a smart meter. Once installed, we will discontinue your monthly meter reading fee. Simply contact us at 800.572.1111 for NYSEG or 800.743.2110 for RG&E if you'd like to opt out.

## Installation

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**Q: Who will be performing the meter upgrades and replacements?**

**A:** NYSEG and RG&E representatives will be upgrading/replacing meters. They will be carrying a photo ID and their vehicles will display the NYSEG or RG&E logo.

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**Q: What does the gas meter upgrade process entail?**

**A:** The gas meter upgrade process includes:

- An inspection of the existing meter
- The addition of a module that allows the meter to communicate with our network

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**Q: What does the electric meter replacement process entail?**

**A:** The electric meter replacement process includes:

- Removal of the legacy meter and inspection of the meter box
- Installation of the smart meter
- Documenting both old and new meter numbers and readings

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**Q: How long will the upgrade/replacement take, and will my service be interrupted?**

**A:** Meter replacement takes just minutes:

- **For gas meter** upgrades, service WILL NOT be interrupted.
- **For electric meter** replacements, service WILL be briefly interrupted.

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**Q: What days of the week will installations be performed?**

**A:** Hours for meter installations are:

- Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Some Saturday hours may be available)

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**Q: If I'm having my electric meter replaced, will I be told when my electricity service will be interrupted?**

**A:** We will mail a postcard a few weeks in advance of your meter installation and call you the day before installation. When we arrive, we'll knock before beginning the installation. If we don't reach you, we'll leave a door hanger confirming your smart meter has been installed. For some larger commercial customers, we may attempt to schedule appointments to minimize impact on your operations.

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**Q: What do I need to do to prepare?**

**A:** Please have the area around the meter clear to provide sufficient space for the technician to work safely. If your meter is located indoors, the technician will require access to it.

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**Q: What COVID-19 safety protocols do you follow during installation?**

**A:** We provide safe, reliable service to our customers every day, and we have taken a number of precautions in response to COVID-19 to protect you and our employees. We continue to monitor the situation closely and rely on guidance from health and government experts.

For your safety and ours, if your meter is located indoors, when we arrive we'll confirm if anyone in your household is sick, experiencing symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19 so that we can reschedule or take appropriate measures as needed.

Your safety is our highest priority, and we are committed to providing the service you expect while following appropriate safety measures.

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**Q: Where can I find out more information?**

**A:** Fact sheets, FAQs and other information about smart meters and the installation process can be found at [nyseg.com](http://nyseg.com) and [rge.com](http://rge.com).

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## Understanding usage

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**Q: How do I access my energy usage information?**

**A:** Our free online tool, Energy Manager, will provide you secure access to your energy usage. Simply log into My Account to view your energy use details through Energy Manager. Later this year, you will have access to your monthly energy use details. After your smart meter is installed, you'll be able to view detailed energy use day-by-day, hour-by-hour. Don't have a My Account set up yet? Visit [nyseg.com](http://nyseg.com) or [rge.com](http://rge.com) and click on My Account to get started. Registering is easy and only takes a few minutes to get set up.

**Q: How will smart meters help me understand and manage energy usage?**

**A:** Smart meters enable detailed energy use, which means bills are based on your actual use each month. We've also built new tools that can help you better understand and manage your energy usage, including:

- **Energy Manager** — Our online tool connects you with your energy use and customized recommendations to save energy. After your smart meter is installed, you'll have access to detailed energy use down to the hour to better understand how you're using energy in your home or business.

## Understanding usage (continued)

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- **EnergyTrack Usage Reports** — Delivers a monthly snapshot of your electricity use directly to your inbox, so you can identify trends and make smart adjustments. Update your email address in My Account to make sure you don't miss out!
- **Usage Alerts** — In the future, you'll also be able to sign up to receive Usage Alerts. Similar to our Meter Read and Outage Alerts, you can receive updates about your energy use and costs to better manage changes and plan for monthly energy bills.

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### Q: How much detail about energy usage will be available online?

- A:** With our legacy meter, you will be able to see your monthly energy usage through Energy Manager later this year. Once your smart meter is installed, you will have access to your energy usage down to the hour. Plus, you'll be able to view customized savings tips designed for your home or business.

### Q: Can smart meters help me save money on energy bills?

- A:** Smart meters provide access to new tools and resources that can help you make more informed decisions about your energy choices. Knowing when and where you're using energy in your home or business gives you the power to make real-time decisions to determine if there are ways to save and energy options you might want to explore.

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### Q: Are there new pricing options that can help me save?

- A:** In the future, we expect to have new pricing options that will offer lower electricity costs based on the time of day. Pricing options will be optional, and we expect to also have tools available to help you understand and select the best pricing option for you.

## Network and data security

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### Q: Will my energy usage data be secure?

- A:** We take protecting critical infrastructure and the data and information entrusted to us very seriously. We have implemented policy and controls, based on proven security best practices, that specifically address protecting data/information in transit (to and from the meter and our systems) and at rest. Multifactor authentication and strictly enforced password requirements prevent unauthorized access to your information and any equipment in your home or business.

### Q: Do you sell customer data to other companies?

- A:** We do not sell customer data. You will have free access to your data through our online Energy Manager tool. In the future, you will have the option to easily and securely share your energy use data with third parties you authorize who may be able to provide further insights and recommendations that can help you save energy and money.

## Health and safety

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### Q: Are smart meters safe?

- A:** The low-power radio equipment in our smart meters is certified by the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC), ensuring compliance with appropriate safety standards.<sup>1</sup> A smart meter communicates information about energy use with us by sending very brief radio-frequency (RF) signals. Several familiar devices produce stronger RF fields, including cellular phones, walkie-talkies and cordless phones. Other common household devices that use low-power radio signals include televisions, wireless internet systems, laptop computers, video game consoles and baby monitors.

National and international organizations have developed exposure limits to ensure that these devices can be used safely. These were developed

after comprehensive reviews of RF research. The organizations include the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the International Commission on Nonionizing Radiation Projection (ICNIRP), which is part of the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. National Commission on Radiological Protection and Great Britain's Health Protection Agency.<sup>2</sup> In the U.S., the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) have also developed safety standards. The RF signals from smart meters in typical installations are tens to hundreds of times below levels specified in the FCC regulations and standards as safe for everyday exposure. To learn more about radio technology and safety, visit the Federal Communications Commission website at [fcc.gov/oet/rfsafety](http://fcc.gov/oet/rfsafety).

## Health and safety (continued)

### Q: Do smart meters interfere with my other household appliances?

**A:** The FCC regulates all electronics to prevent one type of electronic equipment from interfering with other electronic and wireless devices that operate in the same frequency band. If you do experience interference, here are some tips that may help resolve the issue:

- **Location:** Separating interfering devices usually reduces interference, so make sure the wireless device is located as far from the smart meter as possible. Also, adjust the position of the antenna on the device, if possible, and move the wireless device away from any walls that may absorb the signal.
- **Frequency:** In some instances, changing the operating frequency of your wireless devices will eliminate interference. For wireless-enabled internet routers, a change to either channel one or channel 11 is often effective.

- **Manufacturer installation instructions:** Check to ensure that your wireless device or devices have been installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. Some manufacturers may recommend using a surge-protection device.

### Q: Is a smart meter safe for homes with older wiring?

**A:** A smart meter does not impose any additional burden to the existing meter enclosure or house wiring. The meter installer has been trained to inspect your meter enclosure for any potential equipment concerns. This process could potentially uncover problems that otherwise would go unnoticed. This step was incorporated into our installation process as a safety precaution for you and our installers.

## Other information

### Q: Do I still call you if I experience a power outage?

**A:** Yes, you should still report a power outage via our website, automated phone system or Mobile App. Reports of outages provide useful information to help us respond quickly and efficiently.

### Q: Are smart meters susceptible to damage from severe weather?

**A:** Smart meters are no more susceptible to damage from extreme weather conditions than legacy meters or any piece of outdoor equipment. However, with the daily communications from the smart meters, we are able to detect any meter issues promptly.

### Q: Who owns the electric and/or natural gas meter on my house or business?

**A:** We own the electric meter and the electric line attachment at the building to the pole. We own the natural gas meter and natural gas pipe that runs to the meter. The property owner owns the meter enclosure box, electric line attachment at the building, and all of the electric wiring and/or natural gas piping in their home or business.

### Q: Can you turn my energy service off and on without sending a truck to my home or business?

**A:** Yes. For nearly all of our customers, smart meters will allow us to turn electric service on and off using this

technology in the future. Once installed and connected to our system, we will only be using this technology for a requested turn-off. Normal collection procedures will not change. For your safety, we require the main breaker be turned off prior to any reconnection of service. Electric appliances that may have been left on will resume operation once the electric service is turned on. Natural gas service will still require a visit to the property to turn the service on and off. A natural gas turn-on also requires access to relight at least one natural gas appliance and perform a safety check.

### Q: If I'm behind on my bills, will you turn off my energy service without notice?

**A:** No, we'll continue to follow the same procedures we do today. We bill energy use based on an actual customer or estimated reading for the previous month and provide 23 days for payment. If you miss a payment, we'll mail you a notice to remind you of the overdue payment and when you might be at risk of interruption if payment is not received.

### Q: I have a smart thermostat. Will you use the smart meter to adjust the settings on my thermostat or control any other appliances in my house?

**A:** Smart meters can record only the whole house energy use, they cannot control individual appliances. If you have a Wi-Fi-enabled thermostat and have signed up for our Smart Savings Rewards program, we would adjust your thermostat during events the same way we do today.

<sup>1</sup> The term "standards" refers to exposure limits recommended by scientific or health organizations that have reviewed and evaluated the relevant scientific research.

<sup>2</sup> The organization now includes the National Radiological Protection Board in the U.K. that formerly had responsibility for providing information and recommendations about radio-frequency fields and electromagnetic fields at other frequencies, as well as ionizing radiation sources.