

Advanced metering infrastructure FAQ

This year Southwest EPA is scheduled to begin deploying new meters for the installation of an Advanced Metering Infrastructure system. This will improve the gathering of system information that will be used to improve service and reliability to all our members. The project has been in the planning stages for a year. We are providing some questions and answers to assist in your understanding of this project.

Questions & Answers

What is AMI?

AMI stands for advanced metering infrastructure, a state-of-the-art technology that will enable SWEPA to read electric meters remotely. Reading the meters will no longer require someone physically visiting the site and manually reading the meter. This technology will allow for data to be transferred back and forth from the meter.

How does AMI work?

The meter data from the meter is sent to a module integrated into the meter housing. This data is then transmitted along SWEPA's power lines to the substation where equipment collects the data and transmits it to SWEPA's office. This data is then processed into SWEPA's customer information system.

Will the existing meters be replaced?

Yes, SWEPA will have to replace every meter on its system for the AMI technology to work. These meters will be replaced with AMI enhanced meters containing ACLARA's TWACS modules.

What does an AMI meter look like?

An AMI enabled meter looks no different than a typical meter. One difference some members may notice is that the meter installed at their location is digital instead of electromechanical.

Will meters still be read manually on occasion?

Yes, although the AMI meters will be remotely read, SWEPA will need to inspect, monitor and service the system on occasion.

How will an AMI system benefit SWEPA's members?

By deploying an AMI system, SWEPA will be capable of providing its members with more frequent, timely and accurate meter readings without a meter reader visiting each location to gather the readings. As a result, the need for estimated bills will be virtually eliminated. Also, the system will be used to monitor power outages and blinks resulting in more reliable service to the members.

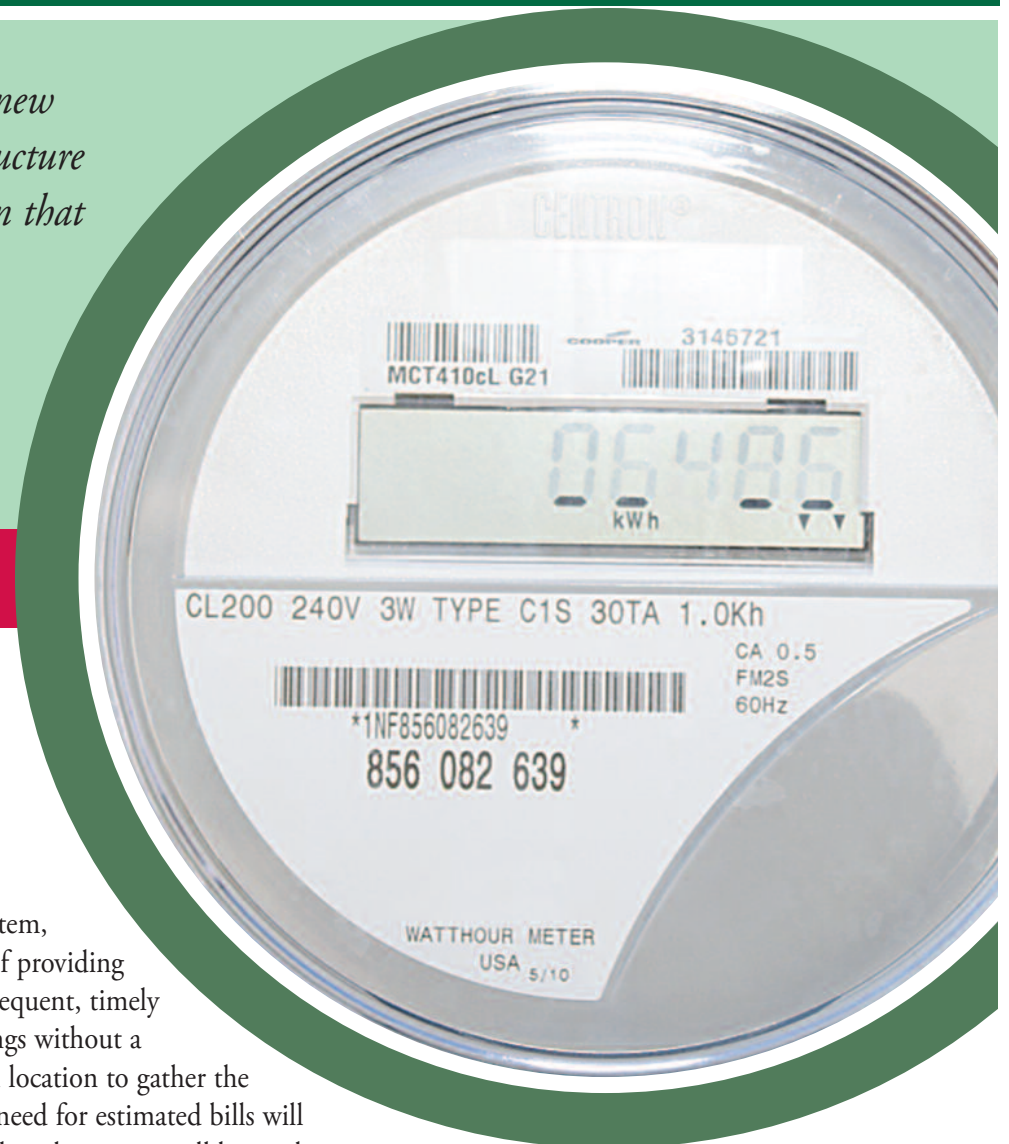
What is the timeframe for installing AMI meters?

SWEPA plans to start the replacement of existing meters with AMI enhanced meters no later than April 2011. It is estimated that all meters will be replaced within 18 months of this date. But, the installation of all components required to utilize the AMI system will require approximately 24 months.

How long will it take to install an AMI enhanced meter at a customer's location?

A typical AMI installation will take approximately 15 minutes, during which time the customer will experience an outage for part of this period.

There will be no cost to the member for the installation of the AMI technology or AMI enabled meter.



Does the member need to be at home for the meter replacement?

No, it is not necessary for the member to be at home for the meter replacement. The technicians will attempt to contact and inform the member by knocking on the door prior to the process, but if the member is not at home a card will be left providing information.

How much will the AMI installation cost the member?

There will be no cost to the member for the installation of the AMI technology or AMI enabled meter.

Who will be installing the AMI enabled meters?

A contracted company specializing in AMI deployment will primarily perform meter replacements. Some meters will be replaced as part of normal operations by SWEPA personnel.