

Smart Meters: Creating a Smarter Energy Future for Nova Scotia

We're modernizing Nova Scotia's electricity grid to provide customers with more convenience, reliability, and control. The first step is upgrading to smart meters — work that began in late 2019 and will continue throughout 2021.

Smart meters are laying the foundation for a cleaner, more reliable and affordable energy future for Nova Scotia. Customers will be able to start taking advantage of smart meter benefits once meter upgrades are complete and the smart meter network is turned on in their area. That process will begin later in 2021. Benefits of smart meter technology include:

- **View Your Daily Usage** - Access your daily energy use information through your online My Account to give you more insight into how and when you use electricity to better manage costs.
- **Set Notifications** - Set-up personal energy use and billing notifications to help you control costs.
- **Improved response** - Smart meters help us understand when and where outages happen, allowing for a faster, more efficient response.
- **Faster Connection** - Connecting and disconnecting electricity can be faster and easier with on-site appointments not always being required.
- **Remote Meter Reading** - In most cases, property visits will not be required to read meters and there will be fewer estimated bills due to meter access issues.
- **Billing Support** - Our Customer Care team can review your daily energy use with you and help resolve billing issues more efficiently.

Will I be charged for a smart meter?

No. There is no charge to upgrade to a smart meter.

Are smart meters safe, accurate and secure?

Yes. More than 70% of homes and businesses in Canada are already using smart meters. Our meters meet or exceed all industry regulations and standards that protect the health and safety of our employees and customers, including approval from [Health Canada](#), [Measurement Canada](#) and [Underwriters Laboratories](#). Safety is always our top priority.

Will smart meters increase my bill and electricity rates?

No. While there are several factors that impact your bill (for example, an increase in energy use, the weather, and the number of days between meter readings), smart meters do not increase bills or electricity rates. Like all meters, smart meters measure consumption but do not affect energy use. Similar to analogue and digital meters, smart meters are regulated by [Measurement Canada](#) and undergo rigorous and regular quality testing to ensure power consumption calculations are accurate. If your bill seems higher than usual, please contact our Customer Care Team at 1-800-428-6230 and they would be happy to assist you.

Do our smart meters cause fires?

No. Our supplier has installed more than 80 million smart meters across North America, without any safety issues. Our meters meet the requirements of [Underwriters Laboratories Safety Standard 2735](#) - an internationally recognized, standard-setting organization that uses extensive safety research and scientific expertise to ensure product safety, including the risk of fire. In October 2018, our supplier received a notice of completion and authorization to apply the Underwriters Laboratories mark, indicating that our meters complied with their safety requirements.

What are radio frequency emissions and do smart meters emit them?

All devices that use wireless communication produce radio frequencies (RF), including common household items like baby monitors and wifi routers. Our smart meters adhere to Health Canada's [Safety Code 6](#), which reflects an ongoing review of scientific studies about safe human exposure and sets safe limits for radiofrequency emissions. In third-party testing conducted in October of 2020, a single smart meter tested at 100x less than the safe exposure limit set by Health Canada.

What information will my smart meter send to you? How?

Smart meters transmit energy use information, in an encrypted format, over a private and secure wireless network to our data centre. Smart meters do not transmit personal information such as: name, address or account numbers. Our smart meters adhere to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Interagency Report 7628 that sets guidelines for smart grid cybersecurity.

What is the plan for introducing Time-of-Day rates?

As part of the smart meter approval process, the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (UARB) asked that time varying pricing tariff options be provided for consideration. Through stakeholder consultation, we'll examine various options and seek solutions that reflect the energy needs of our customers, including a recognition that customers want options that support rate stability and affordability. Any future time-of-day rate will be voluntary; it will be the customer's choice. There would be no change for those who do not participate.

How can I verify my technician's identity? What can I expect during my smart meter upgrade?

A technician from our authorized contractor, Tribus Services will arrive in a branded vehicle, wearing job specific personal protective equipment, and carrying identification. They will let you know they are there, and while practicing physical distancing, will explain the work being performed. The entire process takes less than 15 minutes and you will experience only a momentary loss of power.

Can I opt out from the smart meter upgrade?

Yes. If you opt out of the smart meter upgrade, you will be selecting non-standard meter service from NS Power and will be charged a fee for providing that service. This fee ensures that the costs to manually read meters and maintain older systems and processes for non-standard meters are not passed on to smart meter customers. These fees have been estimated as follows:

- Opt out customers whose meters are currently read every two months will pay a fee of approximately \$4 per month. This fee and the number of times a meter is read annually, is subject to review and approval by the UARB.
- Opt out customers whose meters are currently read each month will continue to have monthly reads and pay a fee of approximately \$22 per month.

Customers will not be charged these fees or experience a change in the number of times their meter is read annually until approval is received from the UARB to begin charging fees.

To opt out, you are required to review and submit an opt out acknowledgement form on our website or by contacting our Customer Care Centre. Customers who opt out may, at any time, opt back in at no cost.

To learn more about smart meters, please visit nspower.ca/smartmeters or contact our Customer Care Centre at 1-800-428-6230 or by email at smartmeterinfo@nspower.ca