

Automated Meter Reading (AMR) Frequently Asked Questions

What is AMR and how does it work?

AMR is an acronym for automated meter reading, a technology that enables natural gas meters to be read remotely, without accessing a customer's yard. CenterPoint Energy's AMR system uses radio transmitting devices that are attached to the meter sets of existing CenterPoint Energy natural gas customers. Readings from each meter will be collected once a month by a mobile meter reading device mounted to a CenterPoint Energy vehicle, resulting in timely and accurate bills based on actual natural gas usage and virtually eliminating estimated bills.

What are the benefits of an AMR system?

AMR eliminates the need for CenterPoint Energy to send a technician to manually read a customer's natural gas meter – essentially doing away with estimated bills – or to arrange access with a customer with inaccessible meters to obtain readings.

Who will receive AMR devices?

AMR devices will be installed on the existing natural gas meters of residential and commercial natural gas customers in CenterPoint Energy's Houston and Texas Coast divisions (approximately 1.2 million customers).

When will I receive my AMR device?

CenterPoint Energy began a pilot installation of about 2,000 AMR devices in December. The full deployment will begin in January 2011 in the central Houston area and will move outward until approximately 1.2 million AMR devices are installed by the end of 2013.

How long will it take to install my AMR device?

Installation of your AMR device should take less than 10 minutes. In most cases, the installation can be completed even if you are not at home, as long as your existing meter is accessible.

Will I lose natural gas service with the device is installed?

In most cases, there will be no interruption of natural gas service when the AMR device is installed. In a very few instances, a new natural gas meter may be installed. If this is necessary, CenterPoint Energy will need access to your home to re-light the pilots on your natural gas appliances.

I am currently on CenterPoint Energy's post card reading program. Will I still receive a post card from the company to fill out and send in my reading?

Once an AMR device is installed, we will be able to read your meter without coming onto your premises – so we will no longer mail you a post card and you will not have to read your own meter or call in your meter reading.

Is CenterPoint Energy planning to install an AMR system in other parts of its gas distribution territory?

CenterPoint Energy has been successfully using AMR technology in its Minnesota operations since the mid 1980's. We are currently evaluating whether we will install an AMR system in other parts of our gas distribution service territory.

I already paid \$180.00 for an AMR device to be installed on my meter; will I get a refund for that device?

Unfortunately, no. The AMR device that we will be installing is newer technology than the device currently installed on your meter. The existing device will have to be replaced and no refund will be issued.

If I move, can I take my AMR device with me?

No, but AMR devices will be installed not only on existing natural gas meters at homes and business across Houston but also in newly constructed homes and facilities even outside the areas scheduled for deployment at a given time.

How much will this cost?

Cost for the AMR deployment will be recovered through a future ratemaking process, as all capital expenditures are recovered; there is no immediate impact to customer rates.

Who manufactures the AMR device?

CenterPoint Energy is installing 1.2 million Itron AMR devices throughout its Houston and Texas Coast division. Itron is a leading provider of smart metering, data collection and utility software systems, with nearly 8,000 utilities worldwide that rely on their technology to optimize the delivery and use of energy and water.

Who will install the AMR device?

A contract company, Digco, will be installing the AMR devices on existing CenterPoint Energy natural gas meters. The contractors will carry CenterPoint Energy ID cards, and their vehicles will have signage that identifies them as a CenterPoint Energy contractor.

Is this the same device that CenterPoint Energy is installing on electric meters in the Houston area?

No, but AMR systems are the foundation for Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) systems. AMI goes beyond AMR systems by measuring, collecting and analyzing energy usage and interacting with advanced devices that show customers how much energy they are using as they use it, giving them an opportunity to change consumption in near real-time, which is just one benefit that CenterPoint Energy's smart electric meters will provide. For information on that program, visit CenterPointEnergy.com/EnergyInSight.

Will my AMR device interfere with my radio, telephone, computer or other equipment?

No, the transmitting device operates in compliance with FCC regulations to avoid interference with other electronic devices. The AMR system operates independently at a low-power frequency reserved for this purpose and will not interfere with other equipment.

Is my account information secure?

Yes. It's an encrypted, secure process in which only meter readings or module numbers are transmitted. AMR does not transmit personal customer information.

Will a technician stop by periodically to check on the AMR system?

Representatives will be available if there is a problem with the AMR system. The battery only has to be replaced every 17-20 years.

Will I still see CenterPoint Energy service trucks in my area?

Yes. CenterPoint Energy service personnel will continue to provide timely and efficient service for all gas-related customer service needs.