

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT ADVANCED METERING IN WAUPUN

You may have heard information recently about advanced meters—sometimes referred to as smart meters. Many electric and water utilities, including Waupun's locally owned municipal utility, are making use of this technology. Wondering what this industry shift means for you here in Waupun? Read on for answers to some frequently asked questions.

Q. Is Waupun Utilities using advanced meters?

A. Yes. Following seven months of careful research and consideration, the Waupun Utilities Commission approved a plan to transition to advanced electric and water meters. Waupun's not-for-profit, locally owned utility is making use of advanced metering as an important tool for the business of operating our community's electric and water systems.

Q. How do advanced meters work?

A. Advanced meters use a safe, secure and effective two-way communications link that will allow our utilities to provide proactive customer service, improve system reliability, and operate more efficiently.

Q. Why are these new meters being installed?

A. Advanced meters are an important tool for the business of operating our community's electric and water systems. They will help our utility to operate more cost-effectively and to provide more proactive and reliable service to our customers.

Q. Will my utility rates go up as a result of advanced metering?

A. No. Our use of advanced meters is not anticipated to have any impact on electric or water rates. In fact, this new technology will help bring important savings to our community.

Q. How can advanced meters provide savings?

A. Waupun Utilities' use of advanced meters will help us operate more cost-effectively for customers. The utility currently meters 4,275 electric services and 3,345 water services, and our old system requires sending workers out in trucks and on foot to complete monthly readings, conduct regular testing, and perform disconnections and reconnections for these meters. Because advanced meters allow these functions to be carried out remotely, Waupun Utilities' new metering system will eliminate nearly all of these expenses.

In addition, the use of advanced meters can more quickly alert us to problems that drive up costs for our utilities and our customers. We will be able to more quickly alert customers to costly water leaks, and advanced meters also allow faster detection of instances of theft and meter tampering, which are dangerous and costly for our system. In the future, advanced meter data will enable our customers to analyze their electric and water consumption and take advantage of demand-response programs that will provide customers with more control over their usage and bills.

Q. What has Waupun Utilities done to help keep down the costs of this initiative?

A. Competitive financing, with a low interest rate, has been obtained for this initiative. In addition, our community is saving significantly by joining with the 50 other locally owned, not-for-profit utilities served by our power supplier, WPPI Energy. WPPI Energy's members are working together to cost-effectively share data management systems, expertise, support and licensing for our advanced metering software and systems.

Q. How will advanced meters improve my utility service?

A. Advanced metering will enable our staff to provide proactive customer service. Advanced metering allows faster detection of service related problems such as electric outages, power quality issues, water leaks, and potential sources of water cross-contamination. Transitioning to the new meters also helps ensure that our electric and water systems will stay in good working order for the years to come.

Q. Will my privacy be compromised?

A. No. As always, our utilities take seriously our obligation to protect your privacy. That will not change with the use of advanced meters.

Q. What assurance do I have that my privacy is protected?

A. Utilities in our state are required to strictly protect your customer usage and billing information, and Waupun Utilities works constantly to safeguard this data.

Our utility is also subject to the FACT Act (Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003), which requires federal agencies, including the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), to establish guidelines for use by creditors to prevent identity theft. In 2007, the FTC published "Red Flags Rules" requiring that creditors create and implement a program to address the detection, prevention, and mitigation of identity theft. As a creditor, Waupun Utilities implemented an identity theft prevention program under the Red Flag Rules, which went into effect Dec. 31, 2010.

Q. Will the advanced meter make it possible to know what I'm doing inside my home?

A. No. The only information collected by an advanced meter is how much energy and water is consumed based on time of day, not how the energy or water was used. Advanced metering cannot detect the presence of people in their homes, nor can it collect information about customers' personal activities or private lives.

Simply put, the information collected by an advanced meter will be used for the same purpose as the data from the old meters: measuring consumption and preparing a bill.

Q. Are advanced meters safe?

A. Yes. While wireless advanced meters have become the subject of considerable attention for their use of low-level radio frequencies (RF), in-depth review of the scientific literature by the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that the small amount of RF energy produced by smart meters is not harmful to human health.¹

In the US, the FCC establishes the requirements for use of the RF spectrum and acceptable exposure limits for the public. Waupun Utilities' advanced meters, which are manufactured by Elster, comply with and exceed these requirements, as well as international requirements set by global bodies.

Waupun Utilities takes your health and safety seriously and would never install equipment that would jeopardize our relationship with you. The well-being of our customers is our community-owned utility's top priority.

¹ World Health Organization. <http://www.who.int/peh-emf/about/WhatIsEMF/en/index1.html>.

Q. How significant is the RF signal from an advanced meter?

A. The low level of RF emissions associated with advanced meters is far smaller than that of other common household items.² In fact, everyday devices such as cellular phones and microwave ovens typically cause far greater RF exposure than advanced meters.³ In terms of RF output, Waupun Utilities' advanced meters typically compare as follows to other common household wireless devices:⁴



Furthermore, RF exposure decreases with distance from the device. Waupun Utilities' advanced meters are typically installed on the exterior of a building, whereas much higher-emitting devices such as microwaves and mobile phones are often operated a few inches or a few feet from the user. In addition, while other common household devices emit RF signals far more frequently, or even constantly, Waupun Utilities' advanced meters typically will only transmit a signal four times per day, and each transmission lasts for approximately one second.

Q. What is the timeframe for Waupun's advanced metering initiative?

A. Following seven months of careful research and consideration, the Waupun Utilities Commission approved a plan in September 2012 to transition to the use of advanced electric and water metering. In October 2012, the Waupun Common Council approved the project financing.

Waupun's advanced metering initiative is expected to proceed as follows:

- *Through Late 2012 – Utility software installation and data management system testing*
- *January 2013 – Installation of new electric and water meters begins*
- *Spring 2013 – Electric meter installations completed*
- *By End of 2013 – Water meter installations completed*

² Environmental Defense Fund. <http://www.who.int/peh-emf/about/WhatisEMF/en/index1.html>.

³ Richard A. Tell, Richard Tell Associates, Inc. (April 6, 2005).

⁴ Based on FCC 47CFR1.1310, which averages exposure over 30 minutes of usage. Comparative data provided by Elster.

Q. What changes will I see when my meter is installed?

A. You likely will not notice any change, but once your advanced meter is installed, your usage data will be transmitted securely and efficiently to Waupun Utilities.

Q. What if I have questions or want more information?

A. Our community-owned utility is committed to keeping you informed about this important initiative. We will provide regular updates at utility commission meetings, and customer questions are always welcome. Please contact our utility staff at (920) 324-7920.



Shared strength through  WPPI Energy

At Waupun Utilities, we believe affordable public power strengthens our community and helps our neighbors. That's why, through WPPI Energy, we're partnering with other local not-for-profit utilities to share resources and lower costs.

CALL US AT (920) 324-7920 FOR MORE INFORMATION