

FAQs: Smart Meters

About smart meters and their benefits

1. What are smart meters?

Smart meters are a new generation of energy meters that allow you to learn about your consumption pattern and help utilities conduct system monitoring and customer billing without manual intervention.

2. What is the prepaid function in a smart meter?

The prepaid function in a smart meter operates similarly to a prepaid mobile. You need to recharge your meter in advance to use electricity. In the case of low or no balance, you will receive 2 or 3 alerts through your meter and/or SMS before supply is disconnected. The prepaid function helps in avoiding unexpected bills and also allows you to budget your usage.

3. Can I choose between a prepaid and a postpaid smart-meter?

The option lies with the DISCOM based on the regulatory provisions.

4. Are smart prepaid meters compulsory?

Regulations mandate the installation of prepaid smart meters in a phased manner.

5. Will I have to pay for installing a smart meter?

You are not required to pay upfront for the smart meter installation.

6. What are the benefits of using smart meters?

- a) Smart meters can digitally send your electricity reading to the utility.
- b) You can track electricity consumption using a mobile application.
- c) You can recharge your electricity account in advance.
- d) It helps the utilities improve power supply.

7. What is the process for smart meter installation?

Your utility will take the initiative to change your present meter into a smart meter.

8. Do I need to install a 'smart' sub-meter for separate floors or tenants?

The mandate is to install smart meters at the interface points with DISCOM. Further, you may install smart sub-meter for separate floors/tenants at your option.

9. I have a solar rooftop system; can I get a smart meter?

Yes, smart meters can be installed with a solar roof top. However, the policy for installation may vary from state to state. Thus, you may contact your local utility office for more information.

Billing and Recharge

1. Would there be a change in my electricity tariff due to smart meters?

There will be no change in the tariff structure for smart meters. However, you may check with your local utility's mobile application or website for more information on discounts or incentives offered for installing smart meters.

2. Will my electricity bill increase after installation of a smart prepaid meter?

There will be no increase in your electricity bill as compared to a traditional meter. Smart meters will increase the accuracy of meter reading by eliminating human errors associated with manual meter reading and will also allow you to monitor your consumption pattern.

3. How can I recharge smart meters (including minimum recharge amount)?

You can recharge your smart meters through any of the following:

- a) Utility collection counters.
- b) Nearest power station.
- c) Nearest common service centre.
- d) Digitally through the utility's mobile application, website, or payment wallet linked application.

4. Will I receive any alerts from my utility for low balance or disconnection?

Yes, you will receive an alert from the utility on your registered mobile number, smart meter, and the utility's mobile application.

5. How long will it take for the recharge to reflect on my meter?

Typically, a recharge should reflect on your meter within few minutes. In case of a delay, please contact your utility office.

6. What is the minimum balance amount I need to maintain in my account to prevent disconnection?

Although there is no mandate for a minimum balance, it is still advisable for consumers to keep a minimum balance to continue to enjoy uninterrupted power supply.

7. How can I check the balance on my smart meter?

You can check the balance amount on your smart meter by doing any of the following:

- a) Checking the display on energy meters.
- b) Using your mobile application.
- c) Logging-in to the utility's website with your customer ID.
- d) Calling the utility's toll free number.

8. Will my power supply be cut off immediately if my recharge gets exhausted?

In the event of a low balance, you will receive alerts from the utility on your registered mobile number, smart meter, and the utility's mobile application before the supply cuts-off.

9. How can I distinguish between a power outage and a disconnection?

In the case of a disconnection, the meter will still have supply and show a message of low or no balance.

10. How will I receive my electricity bill – physical, SMS or electronic?

You will receive electricity bills through mobile SMS in addition to the existing modes provided by the utility. The information is also available on the utility's mobile application.

11. How frequently will I receive my electricity bill?

The billing would be as per your existing cycle.

Feedback and Redressal

1. Can I check the accuracy of my smart meters?

If you suspect the smart meter to be tampered with or is giving an incorrect reading, you can contact your local utility (in-person, toll-free number, or any other mode provided by the utility) with your complaint. Your utility will get the meter checked at payable charges.

2. What can I do if I am unable to recharge through the mobile application or if there is a transaction failure?

You can complain about the recharge failure at the grievance redressal numbers of your utility or register a complaint through the utility's mobile application. The concerned authority will guide you through the process.

3. Who should I approach if the power supply does not resume even after recharge?

Typically, power restoration takes place within a few minutes of recharge. If the connection is not restored, you may contact your utility via a grievance redressal number to get the problem rectified.

4. What should I do if my supply gets disconnected even though the balance in my prepaid meter is available?

Contact your utility helpline number, available on the website and mobile application.

5. How can I track my complaint status?

The present complaint redressal mechanism will be applicable, for smart meter related complaints.

6. How can I change my registered mobile number?

The change of mobile number is done through the established KYC process of your utility.

Data Protection and Privacy

1. What data does a smart meter collect?

Smart meters are programmed to collect real time electricity usage data. This data helps the utilities to improve their service quality.

2. Can utilities share electricity consumption data with third parties?

Utilities cannot share any personalised consumer data without your consent. Anonymised electricity consumption data can be used for analysis and research by utilities. Data privacy laws will be adhered to before sharing data with third party agencies.

- 3. Who will be responsible for managing the privacy and security of my data?**
The concerned power distribution company (utility) will be responsible for managing the privacy and security of data in accordance with the applicable laws.
- 4. Can I request access to the data collected through the smart meter?**
Yes, you can access your smart meter data via your utility's mobile application or website.

Miscellaneous

- 1. What are the features of a smart meter?**
The following are the consumer-friendly features of a smart meter:
 - a) Easy Top-up facility
 - b) Notification of Low Credit
 - c) Provision of emergency credit by the utility during holidays and non-working hours (1600 – 0800 the next day).
 - d) Enablement of promotional discounts and offers on the sale of power
- 2. How can smart meters help me reduce my energy bills?**
You can check and track energy consumption on a real-time basis with the help of the utility's mobile application or website. This information can track the electricity usage data and the tariff paid for the same.
- 3. What are the Value Added Services that will be available with smart meters in the future?**
There are several value-added services that can be rolled out in the future. For example:
 - a) Daily meter reading and energy calculation.
 - b) The ability to compare daily, monthly, and seasonal electricity consumption via graphical representations.
 - c) Direct online payment facility, in certain cases without requiring registration
 - d) Setting a usage threshold limit alert is an option.
 - e) Status of the monthly load
 - f) Option for real-time notifications
 - g) Tracking electricity expenditure with a daily prepaid balance.
 - h) Registering a complaint and contacting customer service through the mobile application.
 - i) Allowing data collection at the appliance level and providing personalised recommendations for energy savings.
- 4. How can I monitor my electricity usage? Can I switch ON/OFF my meter remotely?**
You can use the utility's mobile application or website to track your electricity consumption. However, due to security concerns, the interface is not meant for switching meters ON/OFF.
- 5. Does a smart meter mean that the power supply can be cut off more easily?**
The primary purpose of the smart meter is two-way communication and real time data collection for proactive intervention by the utility in case of a consumer complaint. Disconnection and reconnections will be executed with adequate warnings and as per the state regulations.
- 6. Do smart meters have any adverse effect on health?**

Smart meters do not pose any additional health risk compared to other forms of communication devices used regularly.

- 7. Can smart meters help to improve the quality and reliability of the power supply?**
Yes, with real-time dependable data on quality and reliability, the utilities will be able to monitor and analyse the power supply situation in your area. An informed and active utility can proactively restore power supply faster in the case of a fault or interruption.