

Keep Access to Your Electric Meter Clear

Help CVEA take a precise read and provide you with the best-possible service

Many probably never notice your electric meter. It sits silently spinning, measuring the amount of electricity your household consumes.

However, the people at Copper Valley Electric Association (CVEA) do think about your meter on a daily basis. It is the link between your home or business and the utility.

That is why it is crucial CVEA has access to your meter at all times.

Because you never have to worry about your electric meter, it can be easily forgotten.

Meters can be located in a variety of places around your home or business. The next time you are walking around your property, take the time to find out exactly where your meter is located.

Be aware the meter should be easily accessible by CVEA employees. This means a meter reader or other CVEA authorized staff member should be able to clearly read the meter by standing next to it.

With winter here and snow levels increasing, meter readers are faced with many obstacles.

Here is a list of common winter obstacles and how you can help CVEA staff do their best to serve you:

- Snow and ice can obstruct the path to the meter. When removing snow, keep in mind the path to the meter must be kept clear.
- Keep firewood piles away from the meter. If you must pile wood in the vicinity of your meter,



Darrell Banner, a meter reader for Copper Valley Electric Association, checks the meter and records electrical use at a local business. Photo by Adam Warwas.

leave a clear, unobstructed view for our meter readers.

- If your meter is located behind a gate or fence, make sure access is not impaired by snow or ice.
- Keep pets away from the immediate area. Pets should never be chained or housed next to the meter. Please contact CVEA if your pet poses a hazard or other concern.
- Store seasonal items away from the meter.

By following these simple suggestions, you can help CVEA's meter readers do their jobs more accurately and efficiently.

If circumstances beyond the Cooperative's control make meter reading dangerous or impractical, CVEA will send a bill based on estimated usage considering, where applicable, the consumer's usage during the same month of the previous year or the amount of usage during the preceding month or months.

Keeping your meter clear and obstacle free will ensure the CVEA meter reader is able to take a precise read, providing you with the best-possible service.

What Are Potential Causes of High Meter Readings?

You just took the monthly reading of your electric meter and notice it is significantly higher than usual. What do you do?

Your first inclination may be to call Copper Valley Electric Association and have someone check your meter for accuracy. But rarely is the meter the problem. Following are some of the potential causes to consider:

Lifestyle

The size of your household has increased or you have had guests stay for an extended period. You added a whirlpool or hot tub to your home. Hobbies that include the use of power tools, ovens and other high electrical resistance tools or appliances are being used.

Lighting, refrigeration, appliances and cooking

These account for approximately 56 percent of the average total energy use in the normal household. Using the computer, entertainment center, stove, hot water, hair dryer, washing machine and clothes dryer for extended periods will increase your electric use. During winter, use of lighting in your home increases. The location of refrigerators and freezers is important. Never place a refrigerator or freezer in direct sunlight. The refrigerator or freezer must work harder to overcome excessive heat. Be sure refrigerators and freezers have adequate ventilation.

Equipment maintenance

If your appliance is more than 15 years old, its efficiency may decrease significantly and require more energy to do its job. It is important to clean or replace the condenser, coils or filters on your appliances regularly. You may need to replace the appliance itself. Old electrical wiring often will have loose connections, resulting in increased electrical use and creating potential safety hazards.

Seasons

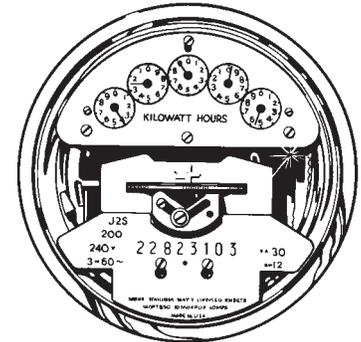
Additional heating load will cause an increase in electric use. Heating and cooling accounts for approximately 44 percent of the total energy use of the normal household. Using space heaters, fireplaces, or vehicle block heaters in the winter can dramatically increase your energy consumption. Running a dehumidifier or watering lawns and gardens in the summer will increase your energy use.

Construction or remodeling activities

Has there been any underground excavation recently? If you have underground wiring, the electric wires may have been nicked, resulting in a direct short. Once you have located the source of your problem, you may need to call your electrician immediately.

For further information on ways to reduce your electric bill, visit www.cvea.org or go to the U.S. Department of Energy website at www.eere.energy.gov.

Easy As Clockwork



The standard electric meter is a clock-like device. As your home draws current from the power lines, a set of small gears inside the meter move. The more power consumed at one time, the faster the gears rotate. When you calculate usage on an electric meter, read and write down the numbers as shown on the dials from right to left. When the pointer is directly on a number, look at the dial to the right. If it has passed zero, use the next higher number. If it has not passed zero, use the lower number. If the hand of a dial falls between two numbers, use the smaller of the two numbers. The hands of adjacent dials turn in opposite directions to each other.