



Consumer Alert

Your Utility Meter: Accessibility and Location



Access Is Important For You and Your Meter Reader

Providing access to your utility meter is the best way to ensure that you receive safe, reliable, and accurately billed service. Access and safety are also very important to your meter reader. In cases where meter readers feel unsafe conditions exist, they may not enter a property to obtain natural gas or electric

reads. If they cannot obtain an actual read, your bill may be estimated. Estimating bills may result in recording lower than actual usage, resulting in a "catch-up" bill, or higher than actual usage, requiring a larger payment for the customer.

Customer Responsibilities

Although your pet may seem friendly to you, the meter reader is a stranger and his/her presence in your pet's "territory" may provoke an unwelcome response. If the meter reader feels threatened by your pet, your meter may not be read. As a customer, your responsibilities are to:

- ⊕ Confine your pets either indoors or chained away from the meter;
- ⊕ Clear tall grass, shrubs, bushes, automobiles, leaves, snow, icicles and debris that may hide or damage the meter;
- ⊕ Unlock your gate on the day your meter is scheduled to be read, provide the company with a key to the gate or call the company to arrange a reading time if your gate must remain locked;
- ⊕ Arrange for an adult to be present when the meter inside your home is to be read by a utility employee who presents picture identification for security.

Can You Read Your Own Meter?

You may read your own meter. If you elect to read your own utility meter your utility company will provide postage-paid, pre-addressed postcards for this purpose upon request, or permit you to report meter readings on a secure company website, by telephone, or by other reasonable methods. Your company is required, however, to periodically obtain actual readings, and Michigan Public Service Commission rules require that an actual reading of every meter must be obtained at least once a year.

Meter Relocation

Major electric and gas utility companies in Michigan are actively involved in programs to move customer meters to locations that are accessible to meter readers and maintenance workers. Federal and state gas safety regulations require gas meter inspections at least every three years. Moving gas meters outside allows the utility to check them on a regular basis without entering your home.

Who Pays For Meter Relocation?

Most meter relocation costs associated with utility-initiated programs are paid for by the utility company, unless you want the meter placed in a different location than selected by the utility. In those instances you pay the additional costs to accommodate your location preference.

In some circumstances, you may bear the responsibility for the charges to move a meter including:

- ⊕ If there is unauthorized use of service or meter tampering.
- ⊕ If you have denied access to the meter and service has been shut off by disconnection at the pole or at the street.
- ⊕ If you have refused access to the meter on two separate occasions.
- ⊕ If harm to the meter reader is threatened even once.
- ⊕ If you request that the utility relocate the meter.



Structural Renovations

Contact your utility company if your meter must be removed or relocated to accommodate additions or renovations (fences, decks, patios, barrier-free ramps) to your property. Do not try to remove or relocate a meter yourself, since it could be dangerous to you and your neighbors. Never place a meter under a deck or porch.

