



NETWORK

Questions you may be asked by customers

October 2017

Why is the industry moving to digital meters?

Apart from our isolated diesel powered systems in remote and regional Queensland, the Ergon Energy Network is part of the National Electricity Market. The Power of Choice reforms are a new set of rules being brought in by the National Electricity Regulator. These rules make the installation of Type 4 digital (interval) meters mandatory when a new or replacement meter is needed. This change is coming into effect on 1 December 2017.

What is a Type 4 meter / Digital meter?

Retailers are using the term 'Type 4 digital (interval) meter' to describe a meter that records power use in 30 minute intervals, has a digital display and has a remote communications device which allows for remote meter reads in a 3G/4G network area. These are also known as Type 4 digital meters with communications.

What does the move to digital meters mean for our customers?

1. The introduction of this new digital metering technology, is intended to give customers more control in managing their electricity:
 - Power use data is captured data every 30 minutes, giving families more visibility over their electricity consumption
 - Monthly billing allows for better budget management
 - Customers are likely to be able to view their electricity usage online on a daily, monthly or yearly basis and, in time, project their final bills and set alerts to better manage their power use.

Who will customers have to contact about meter installations, replacements and upgrades?

From 1 December, customers will deal solely with their chosen Retailer for all requests in relation to the installation, update or maintenance of metering services.

Customers may see more electricity industry provides (e.g. meter providers) in site to conduct work at their premises when they submit a request, to their retailer, to install, update or maintain their electricity supply (e.g. Distribution Network field crew (Ergon Energy Network), Meter Providers and Electrical Contractors).

Questions that customers may ask:

1. What is a Type 4 Meter / Digital Meter?

- Type 4 digital (interval) meters (also known as Interval Meters, Advanced Meters Comms Enabled Meters and/or Type 4 Meters) capture half hourly electricity consumption readings and can be read remotely.
- Type 4 digital meters is the term used by us in reference to new meters being installed by retailers.

2. Can I opt out of a new Type 4 digital meter?

- A customer can refuse to have a Type 4 digital meter, in which case, the new digital meter will still be installed, but the communications capability is not installed. This meter is known as a Type 4A. Type 4A meters are not recommended as many of the customer benefits of having a digital meter are lost.

3. How much will the new meters cost and will customers be charged?

- Yes there will be a charge for a new meter. Retailers are currently finalising pricing for digital meters – for more information please contact your respective Retailer.

4. Will it take longer to have my electricity connected?

- Retailers will co-ordinate requests for all new connections, replacement meters and service upgrades so that they can reduce the likelihood of electricity supply work taking longer.

5. Are digital meters a health concern?

- No. The RF EMR emissions from digital meters are regulated by the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA). ACMA's regulatory arrangements require wireless devices, including digital meters, to comply with the exposure limits in the ARPANSA RF Standard. For more information visit the ACMA website.

The introduction of Power of Choice Reforms will result in a number of key market changes and will lead to more benefits for our customers. The table below highlights some of the changes you can expect:

EXISTING TYPE 6 METERS	TYPE 4 DIGITAL METERS (WITH COMMS)
Current Type 6 basic meters are read manually on a quarterly basis.	Type 4 digital (interval) meters with communications can be read remotely and capture data every 30 minutes.
Electricity bills are currently synced to three monthly meter reads.	Monthly billing options can provide more manageable bills.
All Type 6 basic meters currently require manual reads at the customer premises.	Type 4 digital meters can be read remotely with meter data uploaded by 3G / 4G every 24 hours.
Tariff changes currently require a site visit.	Fast tariff changes with remote capacity to switch tariffs are possible with the new Type 4 digital (interval) meters

Distribution network teams must attend site to de-energise or re-energise a premises.

Disconnects can now be undertaken remotely (no truck roll for de-energisations), making it faster and easier. Remote reconnections are currently not allowed under legislation, but these will be possible if this legislation changes in the future.

Retailers will be able to remotely carry out vacant property reads at a customer's request.