

Facts about D.C. Smart Grid/Meter

What is the Smart Grid?

While there are many technical definitions of the smart grid, a layman's definition is: a two way electric delivery and communications network that allows consumers to have greater control over their energy usage and enables PEPCO to measure consumption on an hourly basis, monitor the status of your service connection and communicate with remote devices in the network.

At some point, you will be able to install devices in your home that enable you to control your appliances to take advantage of variable rates or control remote functions such as using your laptop computer or your cell phone to turn off the lights or turn on your dishwasher or even an alarm system.

Once end user standards are established, some of these features might be available from PEPCO, others you may be able to buy from your local Big Box hardware store.

What should I expect? - A Smart Meter in Your Home

Starting sometime around October 2010, PEPCO will begin installing a new type of electric meter at the premises of every electric customer in the District. The complete smart grid network should be installed by the end of 2011. The new meter will continue to bill your usage on a monthly basis and you will not see any change in the format of your electric bill until late 2011. The new rates for the smart grid will not be implemented until 2013.

OPC will provide you more information about the meter and bill format as details are available.

Where will the Smart Grid be?

Locally, the Smart Grid will be PEPCO's distribution system, one of smaller many networks within the broader national network. As more consumers install solar panels and micro-generation resources in their communities, these devices can be connected to the network. For example, as electric vehicles become available they can be connected to the network to recharge, or to act as "extra" battery power on demand during high use periods.

Office of the People's Counsel



1133 15th Street, NW, Suite 500 • Washington, DC 20005

Phone: 202.727.3071 • Fax: 202.727.1014 • TTY/TDD: 202.727.2846 • Website: www.opc-dc.gov



Why do we need a Smart Grid?

Three issues drive the need for a smart grid:

- the need to reduce the demand for electricity when the price of producing electricity is high,
- the need to produce electricity with cleaner sources of fuel thereby reducing carbon emissions and;
- the need to convert our transportation sector to run on electricity instead of foreign oil.

What is in it for me as an average consumer?

The smart grid will deliver a number of benefits all designed to give consumers greater control over their energy usage. Specifically, you will have:

- The ability to choose a pricing plan that fits your usage,
- Detailed information about your energy usage,
- The ability to program your smart thermostat to adjust its usage in response to changes in the price of electricity
- The ability to remotely control your heating and air conditioning system
- The ability to know your bill-to-date
- Actual meter readings instead of estimated readings

What will this cost?

PEPCO applied for and received a federal grant of \$44.6 million to support the deployment of the smart grid in the District of Columbia. This is estimated to be about half of the cost of replacing all of the meters and building in the special components to operate the network. PEPCO has received permission from the Public Service Commission to collect the balance of the costs from ratepayers. The exact amount ratepayers will pay will be determined by the Commission when it conducts a rate proceeding to determine if the costs were prudently incurred.

What if I do not want the “Smart” technology?

By law, now that the Commission has approved the new meters, PEPCO can replace your existing meter with a smart meter. However, you can choose not to have a smart thermostat installed in your home.

Finally, even now certain details of PEPCO’s Smart Meter deployment are still being finalized. OPC is working with PEPCO to find ways to share this information with you as soon as it comes available. We hope to update you regularly in the coming months.