

How does KEC conduct meter reading?

In 2003, KEC implemented Aclara's TWACS Automated Meter Reading (AMR) technology and replaced every member's mechanical meter with an electronic meter. This change allowed KEC to reduce costs by removing contract labor and monthly transportation expenses for reading each meter. Reducing costs allows KEC to limit the amount and number of rates increases to our members.

Does KEC have smart meters?

Yes. "Smart meter" is a term being used both in the media and utility industry which generally describes a meter that can automatically communicate the amount of usage recorded at the meter back to the utility. Simply put, a smart meter enables two-way communication between the meter and the utility company. This is different from a meter which requires a manual reading every month by an employee or contractor for the utility.

Are all smart meters the same?

No. There are several types of "smart meters" being used by utilities across the country. Some utilize radio frequency technology and others use power line technology for their communication path. "Smart meters" which use radio frequency technology have been the subject of health effect concerns. Smart meters which use power line technology have not faced health effect concerns in the media.

What smart meter technology does KEC utilize?

KEC's AMR technology utilizes power lines for its communication path. This means the data exchange with the meters occurs over KEC's infrastructure not via a radio frequency (RF). Reading meters in this manner benefits our members by providing timely, relevant electric usage information while minimizing costs.

How does KEC know its smart meters are safe?

KEC's vendor, Aclara, has verified their meters meet all emission requirements set by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The Aclara meters installed by KEC are tested to FCC Part 15 Class B standards. These emission standards are the same standards as required for Flat Screen TVs.

How often does KEC communicate with a smart meter?

Meter readings are recorded every hour and then the readings are communicated back to KEC three times a day at eight (8) hour intervals. KEC will also “ping” (communicate with) the meter if an outage event is recorded. KEC “pings” the meter to validate a continuous flow of electricity is occurring between the meter and KEC. If a continuous flow does not exist, KEC can then identify the location of an outage by analyzing which members have electric service and which members are experiencing an outage. This aids in more quickly restoring electrical power to our members. This is particularly helpful to our members when they experience an outage while away from their homes for extended periods of time.

What is the benefit, if any, to having a smart meter?

KEC believes smart meters have many benefits to our members. First, hourly reads mean our members receive greater information about when they are using electricity. Since our members can view their usage online, they can make educated choices for how they use electricity which results in a member being better able to manage their usage to assist in lowering their electric bills. This is all achieved without having a meter reader in a member’s backyard every hour. The communication download which occurs three times a day back to KEC only takes a couple of seconds to complete.

In addition to the benefits provided to KEC members, KEC as an organization also benefits from smart meter technology. These benefits include:

- Near instant meter readings for move in and out versus estimated bills.
- KEC’s outage response time quickens by pinpointing trouble areas.

Do all KEC members have to use a smart meter?

Yes. This AMR system is the only KEC metering methodology used and all members who receive electricity from KEC must use this methodology.

Does the KEC Board of Directors use smart meters?

Yes. When our Board of Directors approves a policy or procedure for the use of new equipment and technologies, they do so knowing it will also apply to their own homes. In using this type of metering methodology, they have not only deemed it to be a wise and safe choice for all co-op members, but for their own families as well.

What about my privacy? Is KEC or the government spying on me with these meters?

No. The TWACS system automates the meter reading process. KEC’s smart meters can’t monitor, see or control electrical equipment in a member’s home. It collects readings of kilowatts used and sends those meter readings back to KEC.

Can KEC or the government tell what equipment I use or if I am home?

No. KEC's meters are only able to record the total usage of a home; not individual appliance usage or to distinguish what is happening in a member's home.

Will KEC be controlling my appliances through my smart meter?

No. KEC doesn't take control of member's appliances, including air conditioners, heat pumps or water heaters. Some utilities do have the capability of controlling a member's appliances (load control) with a member's permission. Typically, load control programs are structured so a utility pays a member for the ability to reduce a member's load during those times when peaks are stressing the system. KEC has conducted a pilot program of this type, however, at this time it is no longer available to members. When offered, they are on a voluntary basis.

Are KEC's smart meters accurate?

Yes. They've been proven to be as accurate, or more accurate, than a mechanical meter.