

FACT VS. FICTION

The truth about CSU's advanced electric meters

Misunderstandings about advanced technology often lead to urban legends. That's certainly the case with advanced electric meters, which College Station Utilities is rolling out across the community in early 2020 to bring the benefits of a modernized electric grid to our valued customers. The advanced meters replace the old analog meters used to record electrical usage.

Regrettably, various myths have emerged about advanced meters, despite the vast, common-sense benefits they offer.

These are the most common:

MYTH #1

Advanced meters are less accurate than analog meters.

TRUTH

Advanced meters are rigorously tested for accuracy even before they leave the manufacturing plant to prove field reliability and product lifetime performance. Manufacturers must follow performance standards set by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Underwriters Laboratories (UL), to name a few.

Before installation, advanced meters are tested to ensure they comply with these standards. Repeated tests confirm that digital meters typically more accurate than analog meters.

MYTH #2

Advanced meters are a health threat because they communicate with wireless signals.

TRUTH

An in-depth review of the scientific literature by the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that the small amount of radio frequency (RF) energy produced by advanced meters is not harmful to human health. The RF they emit is well below the limits set by Federal Communications Commission, and it's below levels produced by common household devices such as cell phones, baby monitors, satellite TVs, and microwaves.

You would have to be exposed to an advanced meter for 375 years to get a dose equivalent to one year of 15-minutes-per-day cell phone use. No credible evidence shows a threat to human health from RF emissions at or below RF exposure limits developed by the FCC.

MYTH #3

Advanced meters will not keep data secure.

TRUTH

Just as others have provided secure access to your information online, CSU uses advanced security and encryption technology to safeguard your data. We are involved in national consortiums and work with national cybersecurity to regularly audit our systems to ensure privacy and security.

The privacy of your data is protected, and CSU will continue to work hard to safeguard it. No personal data is housed in this network.

MYTH #4

Advanced meters are hazardous and increase the risk of fire and explosion.

TRUTH

Advanced meters must meet safety requirements and standards spelled out by ANSI, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering (IEEE), International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) and the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA). Public service commissions require independent certification proving that all meters are safe and show resistance to heat, fire, voltages, surges, and self-heating. Advanced meters are simply electronic meters with communications and have been in use in the field for over a decade.

Meter manufacturers certify that the equipment we receive is safe and reliable, furthermore, our new meters will be installed only by trained professionals exercising standard safety precautions.



MYTH #5

Advanced meters are an invasion of privacy.

TRUTH

Advanced meters measure how *much* energy you use, NOT *how* you use that energy. Advanced meters can't tell whether the energy use is from your oven, air conditioner, or hairdryer. CSU adheres to strict policies following state laws that regulate the use of personal information for business functions such as billing and customer service.

Advanced meters are a landmark change allowing two-way communication between CSU and you, much like cell phones and banking. We keep your data private and secure.



MYTH #6

Advanced meters don't provide any consumer benefits.

TRUTH

Advanced meters measure and transmit your energy usage directly to CSU. The advanced meters provide you with incremental energy usage information about how much energy you use. Armed with this information, you can take more control over your energy consumption—and your monthly bills.

As a vital part of our power grid, the advanced meters improve power outage detection and notification. They electronically report the location of outages before you have to call it in, making restoration faster and status notification to you much easier. Greater reliability, faster power restoration, remote readings and connects/disconnects are just a few of the many benefits of our advanced meters.

Separating fact from fiction allows you to take advantage of all the benefits that a modernized electric grid offers.

It's important to stay informed and learn about the different ways CSU is using technology to improve its service. For trusted information about the electric grid and meter technology, visit the U.S. Department of Energy at SmartGrid.gov or go to cstx.gov/utilities.



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