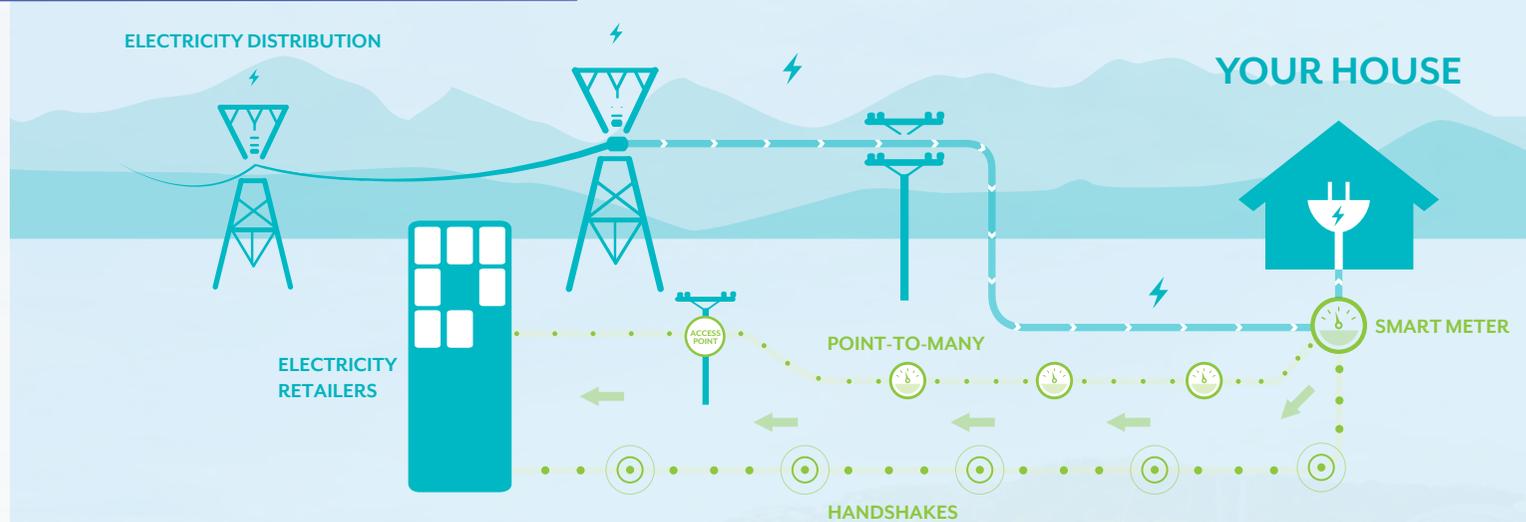


# WHAT IS A SMART METER?

Smart meters are a modern version of an analogue meter, but they go the extra step in helping you to keep track of how much electricity your household is actually using. Unlike an analogue meter, a smart meter records your electricity consumption at half-hour intervals and sends the data to your retailer (power company) each day.

## HOW SMART METERS WORK



There are two different ways a smart meter can transfer your data back to your retailer.

**1** One way a smart meter communicates with your retailer uses the same network as cell phones (called GPRS) and sends 'handshakes' throughout the day. They are called handshake signals because they send their signals back intermittently and very briefly to confirm they are still functioning. The total time of the handshake connectivity adds up to less than one minute per day.

**2** The second way smart meters communicate uses radio wave frequencies to bounce your data from meter to meter and then to an access point, which is typically mounted on a power pole. Once the data reaches the access point, it's relayed back to the retailer. Sometimes these radio waves are referred to as "point to many", as your data transfers through different connection points on its way to your retailer.

Your data is always encrypted and unrecognisable when it's in transit on both the cell phone and the radio networks. For more information on how your data is handled, see our second consumer information piece, *Smart meters #2*.

## MORE INFORMATION

**What are the benefits of smart meters?**

[ea.govt.nz/smart-meters](http://ea.govt.nz/smart-meters)

**Are smart meters bad for my health?**

[ea.govt.nz/smart-meters](http://ea.govt.nz/smart-meters)

**Understanding my bill**

[ea.govt.nz/your-bill](http://ea.govt.nz/your-bill)

## USEFUL LINKS

**Ministry of Health on smart meters**

[bit.ly/MoHsmartmeterinfo](http://bit.ly/MoHsmartmeterinfo)

**Interagency Ministerial report on radio frequency fields**

[bit.ly/MoHreport](http://bit.ly/MoHreport)

**Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment smart meter resource for consumers**

[bit.ly/PCEsmartmeterreport](http://bit.ly/PCEsmartmeterreport)

Email: [info@ea.govt.nz](mailto:info@ea.govt.nz) Online: [ea.govt.nz](http://ea.govt.nz)

[twitter.com/electricityauth](https://twitter.com/electricityauth)

[electricity-authority-of-new-zealand](https://www.linkedin.com/company/electricity-authority-of-new-zealand)

[youtube.com/user/ElectricityNZ](https://www.youtube.com/user/ElectricityNZ)

WHY DO I NEED A METER?

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE A SMART METER?

WHAT ELSE YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUR SMART METER

ON REVERSE

## WHY DO I NEED A METER?

Your electricity retailer uses your meter to inform them how much they should be charging you for your monthly bill. With a smart meter, your retailer can calculate the exact amount of usage, rather than having to estimate your usage or sending a meter reader to your property.

Data from your meter can also help retailers offer you better electricity plans that are more suited to your needs. From 1 February 2016, your personal consumption data will be available to you and providers of price comparison services that you may have employed to help you decide which electricity package will best suit your household's needs. Your smart meter records your consumption data and will show you what time of the day you are using your electricity the most.

## HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE A SMART METER?

Smart meters have been installed on a lot of New Zealand properties already.

Smart meters are typically installed in the same place as the old analogue meter and are usually located on an exterior wall of your house.

Some retailers provide online services that tell you instantly if you have a smart meter. You just need to type in your address on their website.

Your connection data (which tells you the type of meter you have at your property among other things) is available on our website. You can find it under our consumer tab under the [My Meter](#) title.

## WHAT ELSE YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOUR SMART METER

Sometimes smart meters are called Advanced Metering Infrastructure or AMI — they are the same thing.

Smart meters won't cost you more than your old analogue meter and retailers usually combine this charge into a tiny portion of your overall electricity bill.

Your retailer is required to provide a working and up-to-date certified meter for your property.

Most retailers prefer you have a smart meter installed on your property, as it improves the customer service and access to different electricity plans that they offer.

If you have any further concerns, talk to your retailer in the first instance.



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SMART METERS HAVE BEEN INSTALLED INTO RESIDENTIAL HOMES, WHICH IS

70% OF ALL NZ RESIDENTIAL CONNECTIONS.

Don't worry if you are moving house; your meter stays at your old property and you take over the meter at your new property.

Smart meters make switching retailers easier as you don't have to wait for a meter reader to come to your property to calculate your final bill.

For more information, see our resource [Consumer information: Smart Meters #2](#)

## CONTACT US

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THE ELECTRICITY AUTHORITY: TO PROMOTE COMPETITION IN, RELIABLE SUPPLY BY,  
AND THE EFFICIENT OPERATION OF THE ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY FOR THE LONG-TERM BENEFIT OF CONSUMERS.

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