Smart Meter Guide for Johannesburg

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We have found that many of the problems associated with smart meters are those dealing with teething issues (installation, supplying the correct equipment, standard of workmanship, registering the meter, etc.). Some are also the result of larger issues that will be difficult to resolve (quality of the meters, poor cell signals, etc.).

Two makes are currently being supplied: Itron and Hxe. They are being supplied to customers with old Hefcom or other discontinued smart meters, households who have faulty old meters, or households and businesses that are using more than 1000 kWh of electricity a month.

Advice: Don’t be in a hurry to get one. Let the teething troubles regarding installation, readings, registrations, etc. settle down.
What to do When a Smart Meter is Installed

Legally, we all have to change to a smart meter sometime and you can’t refuse the City Power contractors access to your property. If you do, you may well be cut off. See the letter sent to the residents of Blairgowrie for the reasons why.

There may also be other contractors doing the work, not just Edison. Always ask for their ID. Ensure your staff can call you if you are not home. You can use the call centre to help you check the bona fides of the contractor and/or reschedule another visit if necessary.

Call centre is 087 022 0540 or email smartmetersupport@citypower.co.za

You need to do the following when they install the new smart meter:

• Take a photo of old meter and note down who installed it, time, date, old meter number and reading. Note: Hefcom meters wont give you a reading anymore.
• Take a photo or make a copy of the job card.
• Note down the new meter name and number.
• Be satisfied with the quality of the installation.
You are also supposed to get a Customer Interface Unit (CIU). These are handheld wireless devices that allow you to check on your consumption and control the meter. If you have converted to pre-paid, then it’s also how you input the voucher number after you have purchased electricity. You need to be shown how to use it.

You must check if the smart meter is registered on the system and works correctly before the installer leaves. This takes about 30 mins. This is VERY important for pre-paid meters.

**Pre-Paid Conversion**

If you want a pre-paid meter, where you pay for your electricity up front and load it onto the system via a voucher, you should wait till you have received a smart meter as it is the same meter. It will need to be enabled to become a pre-paid meter. The conversion will then be free.

**Advice**: pre-paid meters will be supplied free of charge, once the current smart meter roll out is over. It is best to wait until they reach your area.

**Advice**: you must purchase your pre-paid electricity EVERY month to take advantage of the stepped rates. The more you use during the month, the more expensive it becomes.

Follow the procedure below to convert to a pre-paid meter.
- The customer’s account must be up-to-date if not they must go to the nearest City of Joburg Revenue centres to sign an acknowledgement of debt.
- Then send an email to estimations@citypower.co.za asking for the conversion to prepaid mode. They should attach their latest account showing account is up to date or the signed acknowledgement of debt.
- The conversion of a smart meter to prepaid will be at no cost to the customer.
Problems

You will probably receive estimated readings on your electricity bill for a few months before the system rights itself. You may even receive estimated readings on your old meter number until it is removed from the system. Estimates are usually much higher than your normal use - in most cases it is double. If this happens, you should pay your normal monthly electricity average.

Smart meters use cell signals (either MTN or Vodacom) to transmit data. So if your signal is weak in your neighbourhood or blocked by something, the smart meter may have to be read by a meter reader.

It is useful to check the Vodacom and MTN signals at your house using cell phones or via the respective cell provider's website.

If the meter is installed in a metal meter box, it may interfere with the signal. If so, a hole may need to be cut in the front and covered with perspex.

Trouble Shooting

- Contact the call centre first to check your meter is correctly registered on the system or to log any problems: 087 022 0540 or smartmetersupport@citypower.co.za

- If you have a billing problem, go to your nearest walk in centre. In Region B it is Randburg walk in centre, cnr Jan Smuts and Bram Fischer. They are open Mon-Fri 8am-3pm. The others are located at:
  - Midrand Civic Centre - 300 15th Rd, Midrand.
  - Sandton Civic Centre – 24 Fredman Dr, Sandton.
  - Roodepoort City Hall – C/o Berlandina and Dieperink Sts, Roodepoort.
  - Thuso House - 61 Jorissen St, Braamfontein.
  - Eureka House – C/o Marlborough St & Rosettenville Ra, Wemmerpan.
  - Lenasia Civic Centre – C/o Rose Ave & Eland St, Lenasia Ext 2.
  - Ennerdale Ext 9 – C/o Katz Rd & Smit St, Ennerdale.
  - Eldorado Service Centre – 4046 Link Crescent Ave, Ext 5, Eldorado Park

- If you have a general City Power issue, it is best to contact them using Twitter: @citypowerjhb / Cell or Tablet: citypower.mobi / Internet: www.citypower.co.za and click "Fault Reporting"