

THE BRIHANMUMBAI ELECTRIC SUPPLY & TRANSPORT UNDERTAKING
OF THE BRIHANMUMBAI MAHANAGAR PALIKA

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

[A] SMART PREPAID METERS AND THEIR BENEFITS

1. What are Smart Meters?

Smart meters are a new generation of energy meters that allow you to learn about your consumption pattern and help utilities conduct system monitoring and customer billing without manual intervention.

2. What are the benefits of using smart meters?

- a) You can track electricity consumption using a BEST's mobile application.
- b) You can recharge your electricity account in advance.
- c) Smart meters can digitally send your electricity reading to the BEST.
- d) It helps the utilities improve power supply.

3. What is the prepaid function in a smart meter?

The prepaid function in a smart meter operates similarly to a prepaid mobile. You need to recharge your meter in advance to use electricity. In the case of low or no balance, you will receive 2 or 3 alerts through your meter, mobile App and/or SMS before supply is disconnected. The prepaid function helps in avoiding unexpected bills and also allows you to budget your usage.

4. Are smart prepaid meters compulsory?

The "Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme" (RDSS) of Ministry of Power, GOI mandates the installation of prepaid smart meters.

5. Will I have to pay for installing a smart meter?

You are not required to pay upfront for the smart meter installation.

6. What is the process for smart meter installation?

BEST Undertaking has appointed expert contractors to replace your present meter by a smart meter.

7. I have a solar rooftop system; can I get a smart meter?

Yes, smart meters can be installed with a solar roof top.

8. Do smart meters have any adverse effect on health?

Smart meters do not pose any additional health risk compared to other forms of communication devices used regularly.

9. Does a smart meter mean that the power supply can be cut off more easily?

The primary purpose of the smart meter is two-way communication and real time data collection for proactive intervention by the utility in case of a consumer complaint. Disconnection and reconnections will be executed with adequate warnings and as per the state regulations. There will be provision of emergency credit during holidays and non-working hours (17:00 – 08:00 hrs on the next day).

[B] BILLING AND RECHARGE

1. Would there be a change in my electricity tariff due to smart or prepaid meters?

There may be no change in the tariff structure for smart or prepaid meters. However, as per Tariff order (Case No. 212 of 2022) for FY 2023-24 & FY 2024-25 approved by “Maharashtra Electricity Regulatory Commission” (MERC) the Consumer with prepaid metered connection shall be entitled for a rebate of 2 % in the Energy charge (inclusive FAC) applicable for the Consumer category.

2. Will my electricity bill increase after installation of a Smart Prepaid Meter?

There will be no increase in your electricity bill as compared to a traditional meter. Smart prepaid meters will increase the accuracy of meter reading by eliminating human errors associated with manual meter reading and will also allow you to monitor your consumption pattern.

3. How can I recharge smart prepaid meters?

You can recharge your smart meters through any of the following:

- a) BEST Bill collection counters and designated Banks.
- b) Nearest Customer Care Offices.
- c) Digitally through the utility's mobile application, website, UPI Apps etc.

4. Will I receive any alerts from my utility for low balance or disconnection?

Yes, you will receive alerts from the BEST Undertaking on your registered mobile number, smart meter, and the BEST's mobile application.

5. How long will it take for the recharge to reflect on my meter?

Typically, the recharge should reflect on your meter within few minutes. In case of a delay, please contact BEST office.

6. What is the minimum balance amount I need to maintain in my account to prevent disconnection?

Although there is no mandate for a minimum balance, it is still advisable for consumers to keep a minimum balance to continue to enjoy uninterrupted power supply.

7. How can I check the balance on my prepaid smart meter?

You can check the balance amount by doing any of the following:

- a) Checking the display on energy meters.
- b) Using your mobile application.
- c) Logging-in to the BEST's website with your Consumer Account Number.
- d) Calling the BEST's helpdesk number.

8. Will my power supply be cut off immediately if my recharge gets exhausted?

In the event of a low balance, you will receive alerts from the BEST on your registered mobile number, smart meter, and the BEST's mobile application before the supply cuts-off.

9. How can I distinguish between a power outage and a disconnection?

In the case of a disconnection, the meter will still have supply and show a message of low or no balance.

10. How will I receive my electricity bill – physical, SMS or electronic?

You will receive electricity bills through the existing modes opted by you. The billing information shall also be available on the BEST's mobile application.

11. How frequently will I receive my electricity bill?

The billing would be as per your existing cycle.

[C] FEEDBACK AND REDRESSAL

1. Can I check the accuracy of my smart meters?

If you suspect the smart meter to be tampered with or is giving an incorrect reading, you can contact BEST's concerned Customer care Wards (in-person, through email, telephone, Whats up, or any other mode provided by the BEST) with your complaint. BEST will get the meter checked at payable charges.

2. What can I do if I am unable to recharge through the mobile application or if there is a transaction failure?

You can complain about the recharge failure at the grievance redressal numbers of BEST or register a complaint through the BEST's mobile application. The concerned authority will guide you through the process.

3. Who should I approach if the power supply does not resume even after recharge?

Typically, power restoration takes place within a few minutes of recharge. If the connection is not restored, you may contact BEST Customer Care office numbers to get the problem rectified.

4. What should I do if my supply gets disconnected even though the balance in my prepaid meter is available?

This normally would not happen, however in rarest such possibility, please contact your nearest Customer care Office helpline number, available on the website and mobile application.

5. How can I track my complaint status?

The present complaint redressal mechanism will be applicable, for smart meter related complaints.

6. How can I change my registered mobile number?

The change of mobile number may be done through the established process of BEST.

7. Does a smart meter mean that the power supply can be cut off more easily?

The primary purpose of the smart meter is two-way communication and real time data collection for proactive intervention by the utility in case of a consumer complaint. Disconnection and reconnections will be executed with adequate warnings and as per the state regulations.

8. What are the Value Added Services that will be available with smart meters in the future?

There are several value-added services that can be rolled out in the future. For example:

- a. Daily meter reading and energy calculation.
- b. The ability to compare daily, monthly, and seasonal electricity consumption via graphical representations.
- c. Direct online payment facility, in certain cases without requiring registration
- d. Setting a usage threshold limit alert is an option.
- e. Status of the monthly load
- f. Option for real-time notifications
- g. Tracking electricity expenditure with a daily prepaid balance.
- h. Registering a complaint and contacting customer service through the mobile application.
- i. Allowing data collection at the appliance level and providing personalised recommendations for energy savings.

[D] DATA PROTECTION & PRIVACY

1. What data does a smart meter collect?

Smart meters are programmed to provide real time electricity usage data. This data will help BEST to improve its service quality.

2. Can BEST share electricity consumption data with third parties?

BEST will not share any personalized consumer data without your consent. The Anonymized electricity consumption data can be used for analysis and research by BEST. Data privacy laws will be adhered to in respect of sharing of any data with third party agencies.

3. Who will be responsible for managing the privacy and security of my data?

The BEST will be responsible for managing the privacy and security of data in accordance with the applicable laws.

4. Can I request access to the data collected through the smart meter?

Yes, you can access your smart meter data via BEST's mobile application or website.
