

# Smart meters: a guide for letting agents

## What are smart meters?

Smart meters are the next generation of gas and electricity meters. They are being installed in homes across Great Britain at no extra cost to the billpayer, replacing traditional meters (including prepay key meters).

Smart meters send automatic, accurate meter readings either every half hour, day or month. If the billpayer has chosen to send readings every half hour or day, a meter reading will not need to be taken at the end of the tenancy. Smart meters come with an in-home display that shows how much energy is being used in pounds and pence, helping tenants and landlords keep on top of their bills.

To check what type of meter is in the property and if the meter is in smart meter mode, use the [Citizens Advice Smart Meter Checker](#).

## Who's responsible for installing a smart meter?

There can be some confusion as to whose responsibility it is to install a smart meter. Ofgem, the energy regulator, says that it is the billpayer's right to request an installation and that the landlord shouldn't unreasonably prevent the installation.

For more information, please see Ofgem's website [here](#).



## Tenancy agreements

As it is the billpayer's right to request smart meter installation, and the electricity and gas meters are owned by the supplier, we would recommend that clauses requiring the landlord's consent are removed and landlords are advised accordingly.

It is not possible to replace a smart meter at the end of the tenancy with a traditional meter. This is because suppliers are required as a part of the Smart Metering Implementation Programme to install smart meters.

## The installation

Smart meters are installed by energy suppliers or a contracted third party on their behalf. They will arrange to attend the property on an agreed date and time. The installation process will take around two hours.

The installer has to have a formal qualification to meet specific national standards, as set out in the Smart Metering Installation Code of Practice. All energy suppliers have signed up to this code, which is regulated by Ofgem, who have powers to enforce it.

A person responsible for the property will need to be present during the installation and make sure that the installer has clear access to the meter and the meter cupboard is open. This may mean contacting the building manager to gain access to where the meters are kept.

The traditional meter is removed and is replaced by a smart meter. The smart meters are a similar size to traditional meters and are usually installed in the same place that the original meter was.

As part of the installation process, the engineer will be required to shut off the gas and electricity for a short period of time when the meters themselves are replaced. After restoring the gas supply to the property, the engineer will carry out a gas safety check. The installer will also demonstrate to how to use the smart metering system, including the in-home display and provide energy efficiency advice.

## Damage

In the unlikely instance damage occurs during installation, the installer will make good.

## Asbestos

Energy suppliers and installers each have their own asbestos policies which determine whether they are able to carry out installations where asbestos backboards are present. Those organisations will provide the relevant training to a portion of their installers. Those installers will carry out a risk assessment to determine whether the installation can be safely completed in line with their organisations processes and will advise accordingly.

## Prepayment meters

Smart meters work in both prepayment and credit mode. The billpayer can contact the energy supplier to change their payment method over the air without the need for a new meter.

## Tenancy end

At the end of the tenancy, it is important that the tenant leaves the in-home display for the next tenant as this is connected to the smart meter(s) and not transferrable to other meters.

If you'd like more information on smart meters for private renters, please see our website [here](#).

