2024

Customer 101

TNMP

Texas-New Mexico Power

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Welcome to TNMP!

To our Customers:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide electrical service to your project. To ensure that this process goes as smoothly as possible, we would like to clarify a few key points to prevent or reduce project delays.

In Texas, **a licensed electrician must install electrical systems in all new residential construction to ensure compliance with state codes and safety standards**. This requirement is to prevent hazards like electrical fires and injuries. The work must be inspected and approved by local authorities before the power company can connect service to the home.

For new customers setting up service with Texas-New Mexico Power (TNMP), it's best to consult with a licensed contractor or electrician early in the process, ideally before applying for service. They can help with permits, inspections, and utility specifications, as well as address easements that may affect the project.

Reviewing these requirements in advance helps avoid delays, especially since new installations often require coordination for easements and site inspections needed for TNMP's approval. For more details, the following TNMP guidelines outline documentation, site prep, and other requirements specific to residential and commercial projects:

- All About Easements
- Commercial and Apartments
- Single Family Residential Overhead Service
- Single Family Residential Underground Service

We consider your electrical contractor part of your team and ask that you share this packet, as well as the additional guidelines linked above, with them.

Steps for Starting Residential or Commercial Electric Service

For a new customer applying for electric service with Texas New Mexico Power (TNMP), the process involves several essential steps.

1. Determine if You Have a Meter

- **YES**: If the location has an existing meter, TNMP may simply activate it through the REP.
    - Choose and contact a REP. For a list of REPs serving your area, visit PowerToChoose.com.

  If this applies to you, you can disregard the remaining steps in this document.
- **YES, BUT IT IS NOT ADEQUATE:** If there is an existing meter, and you are in need of an upgrade or line extension:
    - Submit an online request through PowerClerk (See step 4)
- **NO:** If there is no existing meter, TNMP will need to install one. Customers must coordinate with both their Retail Electric Provider (REP) and TNMP for the installation. Ensure you are ready to receive a meter. Talk to your builder or electrician about meeting requirements:
    - Your address is clearly marked at job site
    - Meter can is installed and load wires are present
    - Ground rod is installed and properly connected

2. Determine if You Have an ESI ID (Electric Service Identifier)

The ESI ID is a unique identifier for the location where electric service is needed. The ESI ID number serves to identify the service location for a specific address and identifies the meter where electric usage will be tracked. The ESI ID number is *not* an account number.

Customers can request an ESI ID from TNMP (1-888-866-7456). For many locations, the ESI ID is already assigned, but for new constructions or undeveloped locations, TNMP may need to create one.

3. Contact a Retail Electric Provider (REP)

REP Role: TNMP does not sell electricity directly to consumers. Customers must choose a REP that sells electricity in their area to set up an account and contract for electric service.

Visit PowerToChoose.com for a list of REPs in your area, or you may call 1-866-797-4839. Options vary, so the customer should research available REPs, as each may have different rates, terms, and conditions.

4. Complete a Service Request Through PowerClerk

Before you start your application for new service, a line extension, or an upgrade, we recommend that you contact your builder and/or electrician. Texas State Law requires a licensed electrician to perform all electrical installations, and we recommend you consult with them before initiating your application.

TNMP uses the PowerClerk system to process applications for new service, line extensions, and upgrades (see Basic Terms and Concepts for definitions of these terms). Customers or contractors submit applications through PowerClerk for residential or commercial needs. The application generally requires location details, service needs, and possibly load details, depending on the type of property.

The TNMP New Service Delivery Application Guide details the step-by-step instructions for how to apply for services using PowerClerk. To download this helpful document, click here.

5. Meet Service Requirements

Depending on your service needs, your service requirements may vary.

- **Inspections and Permits**: For new construction, customers may need to complete necessary inspections and obtain local permits. TNMP requires proof that local electrical inspections are complete before service connection.
- **Utility Specifications**: Certain specifications must be met, particularly for commercial-grade equipment or high-load requirements, and TNMP may need additional load information.

We recommend customers discuss these requirements with their contractor(s) before beginning the application process.

6. Schedule Meter Installation and Activation

- **Coordination with REP and TNMP**: Once TNMP verifies that all requirements are met, they'll coordinate with the REP to install and activate the meter.
- **Timing**: Meter installation timelines vary; customers should confirm lead times with TNMP and their REP, especially during peak service periods.

7. Confirm Service Activation

- **Final Check**: The customer should ensure that their REP has verified service activation, as the REP is the point of contact for billing and ongoing service.

Things You Should Know/Questions You May Have

1. BASIC TERMS AND CONCEPTS

New Service: Refers to the initial setup of electricity for a new residential or commercial building. It involves installing the necessary electrical infrastructure, such as the meter and service connection, to deliver power to the property for the first time.

Line Extension: Occurs when additional power lines need to be installed to extend the utility's electrical service to a location not currently connected to the grid. This often applies to new developments or buildings located in remote areas where existing power lines don't reach.

Upgrade: Refers to increasing the capacity or power supply to a property, often by replacing an outdated or undersized electrical system with a larger, more modern one. This ensures the property can safely support higher electrical demand, such as additional appliances or equipment.

Retail Energy Providers (REPs) handle customer service and billing. REPs send monthly bills to customers and collect payments, along with handling most customer services for you.
You choose your retail provider from the current list of authorized REPs, which is available online at www.powertochoose.org, or you may call 1-866-797-4839.

Poles and Wires Companies deliver electricity and read meters. That's us at TNMP. We are the company to contact if you are constructing a new building, adding to an existing building, or adding equipment that will significantly increase your electricity usage. These instances can require additional electric equipment to deliver the new or increased power.

Meter: The meter is a device that measures the amount of electricity consumed by a property, typically used by utility companies to determine billing based on usage.

Meter Can: A protective enclosure or box that houses an electrical meter, ensuring safe and secure installation while providing easy access for utility companies to read the meter.

Meter Base: The electrical housing or mounting point where an electric meter is installed, connecting the electrical supply from the utility to the wiring of a building or property.

2. SERVICE-RELATED QUESTIONS

How long does it take to set up new service?
Timelines vary based on factors like existing infrastructure, inspections, and customer readiness. For specific cases, please contact your REP.

Do Commercial Specs apply to my project?
Commercial specifications (i.e., commercial-grade wiring, transformers, or breakers) are generally required when the projected load requirements exceed normal residential limits, such as large homes with pools or home-based businesses (e.g., a commercial kitchen or workshop).

Customers can submit load data during the new service application process for evaluation. See (LINK) for further details.

3. FEES AND COSTS

What fees should I expect when setting up new service?
Customers may face a variety of fees depending on their specific service needs and location. These fees may include costs for line extensions, trenching, or additional equipment if your property is far from existing service. Contact your REP or TNMP for specific cost estimates based on your location and service needs.

TNMP Fees (Utility Fees)

Service Connection or Extension Fee:
TNMP typically charges a fee for connecting new service fee structure is identified in the TNMP Tariff document. If the property is a new build, or far from existing TNMP infrastructure, customers may be charged for line extensions. This could involve overhead or underground wiring and depends on the distance from existing infrastructure. These fees vary based on location, service type, and the chosen REP. New customers should review the fee schedule with both TNMP and their REP to avoid surprises.

Meter Installation Fee:
If a new meter is required, there may be additional fees for the meter and installation. In addition, the meter fees will vary between standard residential installation and complex installations. For new service installations, customers are responsible for purchasing and installing the meter socket, and there may be a setup fee for the initial connection.

Inspection Fee (If Applicable):
Some new installations require inspection fees if TNMP needs to perform additional assessments. Before connecting, TNMP requires inspections to ensure the service equipment and installations meet regulatory standards. These inspections, sometimes managed by local government authorities, may incur separate fees.

Retail Electric Provider (REP) Fees

Account Setup Fee:
Since TNMP operates as a Transmission and Distribution Utility, customers must choose a REP for actual electricity supply, and the REP may charge setup or administrative fees for starting service.

Deposit:
REPs may require a deposit based on the customer's credit history. Some REPs offer alternatives to the deposit requirement, such as proof of good payment history or credit checks.

Monthly Service Fee:

Fees assessed on a monthly basis for services provided can be found in the TNMP Tariff.

Early Termination Fee (If Applicable):
For customers who sign a contract with a specific term length, there may be an early termination fee if they cancel service before the term ends.

Additional Potential Fees

Late Payment Fees:
If payments are not made on time, REPs and TNMP may impose late fees, typically a percentage of the amount due.

Reconnect Fees (If Service is Disconnected):
If service is disconnected for non-payment or other issues, there is usually a reconnect fee.

Inspection Costs (If Required):
If the property requires electrical inspection or upgrades before service can be connected, the customer may need to cover these third-party costs.

Permit Costs:
Certain municipalities require permits for new electrical installations, with associated fees that vary by location.

Easement Fees:
If TNMP needs to access adjacent properties to install or maintain power lines, customers might need to arrange and cover the cost of securing easements, often involving legal and administrative fees.

Multiple Designs:
TNMP tariffs allow for one design to be provided to the customer as a part of the original request for service. This design is based on the information provided by the customer when the Customer Data Sheet is submitted. Should the customer reject the design and want alternatives prepared, the labor costs associated with the additional design work will be billed to the customer. Requests for additional designs will result in project delays and possible increase in costs.

Contribution in Aid of Construction (CIAC)
A CIAC is a portion of the construction cost expense of building your power line that is borne by you. In calculating the CIAC charge, we take into account the total cost to Texas-New Mexico Power Company of building your power line and the expected revenue generated by your electrical load. If the cost of building your line exceeds the revenue expected from the line, this difference is borne by you. The exact amount of your CIAC charges will be quoted before any work is done.

4. EQUIPMENT AND INSTALLATION REQUIREMENTS

In Texas, the division of ownership between TNMP (the utility company) and the customer for equipment involved in electrical service is clearly defined. Here's a breakdown of what each party typically owns:

Equipment Owned by TNMP (Utility-Owned Equipment)

Meter:
For TNMP customers, TNMP provides, owns, and maintains the electric meter itself. Customers are responsible for ensuring the meter is accessible and not obstructed. This device measures the electricity usage and transmits it back to TNMP for billing. TNMP installs the meter itself, while customers or their electricians are responsible for installing the meter can or meter base.

Overhead Service Drop:
For overhead service, TNMP owns and maintains the wires running from the utility pole to the customer's weatherhead or point of attachment.

Underground Service Lateral:
For underground service, TNMP owns and maintains the underground service line from the utility's main line to the meter.

Primary Lines and Transformers:
TNMP owns and maintains the primary distribution lines, transformers, and other utility infrastructure leading up to the point of service, which connects to the customer's system at the meter.

Disconnect Devices:
For safety and maintenance, TNMP may own a disconnect switch located at the meter or on the utility pole, depending on local regulations. This switch is used to quickly isolate power for maintenance, repair, or emergency situations, ensuring safety for workers and preventing electrical hazards.

Questions About Meters

Can I request a specific location for my electric meter?
Yes, while there are code and accessibility requirements, we'll work with your electrician to determine an optimal location for your meter.

Do I need to be present when my electric meter is installed?
In most cases, you do not need to be present. However, if your property requires access or specific instructions, arrangements can be made with your installer.

How often are meter readings taken?
Daily with the new Advanced Metering System meters used in Texas.

How do I read my own meter? **What do the numbers on my meter mean?**
It is recommended that customers sign up with Smart Meter Texas to view and manage electric usage.

Equipment Owned by the Customer

Customers are responsible for the installation and upkeep of any equipment beyond the point where TNMP's infrastructure ends, usually at the meter. For safety and compliance, all customer-owned equipment must meet local electrical codes and utility requirements.

Meter Can (Meter Base):
The customer is responsible for purchasing and installing the meter can or meter base where the TNMP meter will be placed. This is the metal box that houses the meter. All installations must meet local and national electrical codes. Work with a licensed electrician to ensure compliance with TNMP's specifications and Texas state law. A meter can, also known as a meter socket, is a weather-resistant enclosure used to house an electric utility meter. Its main function is to connect the electric utility's supply line to a building's electrical system, allowing for accurate measurement of electricity usage. Typically installed on the exterior of buildings for accessibility, the meter can holds the electric meter securely, enabling the utility company to track and bill based on power consumption. The service wire is owned and installed to the meter by TNMP.

Weatherhead (for Overhead Service):
For overhead installations, the customer must install and maintain the weatherhead, which is the point where the utility's overhead service drop connects to the customer's service entrance wiring. A weatherhead is a crucial part of the electrical system where the utility's power lines enter a building. It's a weatherproof, hood-like device installed at the top of the service mast to prevent water from getting into the electrical conduit. The weatherhead protects the electrical wires from rain, snow, and other elements, ensuring a safe and dry connection between the utility lines and the building's electrical system.

Meter Loop:
A meter loop is the assembly of components that connect an electric meter to the power company's distribution system. It includes the meter base, conduit, and wiring leading from the meter to the service entrance panel (or breaker box) in the building. For overhead installations, the meter loop often consists of an overhead weatherhead, while underground installations may use conduit to protect the wiring.

What if my meter loop fails to pass inspection?
If your meter loop does not meet our standards upon inspection, our Energy Technician will place a red tag on it and leave a description of the defect(s) found. After the defects are corrected, please call TNMP to request the re-inspection.

Service Mast and Riser (for Overhead Service):
The service mast or conduit that holds the service wires up to the weatherhead is owned and maintained by the customer. It must be correctly sized and installed according to code.

Service Entrance Conductors:
These wires run from the meter can to the main breaker or service panel inside the home and are owned and maintained by the customer.

Grounding System:
The customer must install and maintain the grounding system, including grounding rods, clamps, and bonding as required by code.

Main Breaker Panel:
The customer owns and maintains the main breaker panel and any sub-panels within their property. This is where electricity from the meter flows into the building's wiring system.

Conduit and Trenching for Underground Service (if required):
For underground service, the customer is typically responsible for providing and installing conduit from the meter to the point of connection with TNMP's underground service lateral. The customer may also need to handle any trenching on their property. Trenching is the process of digging a narrow trench to install underground electric service lines. Customers are typically responsible for trenching on their property, as well as installing any necessary conduit, for new or upgraded underground service.

5. EASEMENTS AND PROPERTY ACCESS

What is an easement, and why is it necessary?
An easement is a legal allowance for TNMP to access portions of your property to install, maintain, and repair electric equipment, such as lines and transformers. If TNMP places distribution facilities on your property or any other facilities on another's property to provide service, an easement must be granted. If TNMP must cross a state highway, secondary road, side road, or railroad, state or railroad permits will be required.

Easements are usually defined when the property is developed and ensure the utility has a clear path to provide and maintain reliable electric service. Customers should avoid placing structures or large plants in easement areas to prevent future service interruptions or accessibility issues.

Easements help us ensure reliable service and respond to outages or maintenance needs. The project will not be turned over to the operations group for construction until all required easements and/or permits are in place. For more details about easements, please click here.

How do I find out if an easement exists on my property? Where can I access property records or maps that show easements?
Contact local county clerk.

Can I build on or landscape over an easement?
TNMP recommends not placing structures or large plants in easement areas, as they may obstruct access to electric infrastructure. Unauthorized obstructions may be removed if necessary.

6. OUTAGES AND REPAIRS

Who should I contact during a power outage?
Report outages directly to TNMP via our outage reporting line or online portal. Your REP may also provide outage updates.

How quickly can TNMP restore service after an outage?
Restoration times depend on the cause of the outage and its impact. Our crews work diligently to restore service as quickly as possible, prioritizing safety and reliability.

7. SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE

What should I do if I see a downed power line or damaged equipment?
Stay clear of downed power lines and call TNMP immediately. For damaged equipment, such as poles or transformers, report the issue to TNMP for prompt response.

Who maintains the service line between the pole and my meter?
TNMP maintains the service line to your meter. Customers are responsible for maintaining equipment beyond the meter, including wiring and the breaker panel.

8. GENERAL INFORMATION

What do I do if I'm moving? How do I transfer or cancel my service? Are there any fees involved?
Visit the following link for more details: Click Here

Does TNMP provide natural gas service as well as electric?
No, TNMP only provides electric service. Natural gas services are typically offered by other providers, like Atmos Energy or CenterPoint, depending on your location.

Are there different plans available? How can I find out if I'm on the best plan?
Visit Power-to-Choose website

Are there energy efficiency programs available? How can I participate? Are there incentives for upgrading appliances?
Visit TNMP Energy Efficiency site

How can I track my usage? Is there an online portal available? Can I receive usage alerts?
Visit Smart Meter Texas to view and manage electric usage.

How do I contact TNMP for more information?
For questions about electric service or issues with existing service, contact TNMP at 888-738-7456 or visit our website for additional resources – www.tnmp.com