

Billing Cycle Changes- October 2009

What is changing?

We currently have 12 billing cycles and approximately 65 reading routes. We will be reducing the number of routes and cycles down to 34 routes and five billing cycles.

Why are we making these changes?

Our current read schedule was designed years ago when we had three meter readers on staff and before we had AMR (Automatic Meter Reading). As such, the schedule was outdated and no longer efficient. EPUD still has multiple non-AMR meters which must be manually read, but we can effectively operate with only one meter reader if we make improvements to the read schedule. The new routes are designed to read the non-AMR meters in a more efficient manner which also allows us to bill customers in the same area at the same time of the month.

Why are we changing everyone's billing dates?

There were a lot of inconsistencies with our old billing schedule. Customer-Owners who live in the same area could be on completely different billing and read schedules. Our new routes are designed to read areas that are within close proximity of one another which means they will be on the same billing cycle. In order to meet this goal, we had to update every customer's reading route, including those customers with AMR meters. Basically, we've broken up our territory into four regions and created billing cycles for each region. The fifth billing cycle is for our industrial accounts.

What are the new billing dates?

We will have a set billing schedule for 2010 very soon. The schedule will be designed to generate bills on Wednesdays. Cycle 1 will bill on the first Wednesday of every month, Cycle 2 on the second Wednesday of every month, Cycle 3 on the third Wednesday of every month and Cycle 4 on the fourth Wednesday of every month. Cycle 5 is our industrial route which gets read on the last business day of the month and gets billed out a few days later. This does mean that the due dates will change by a few days each month but the same was true of the other billing schedule. To be absolutely sure what date the bill will be generated, it is best to refer to the 2010 schedule.

What if my new billing date doesn't work with my personal budget?

As long as you pay before we generate your next bill, you will not be considered late and you will not receive a late charge. EPUD runs our autopay process every day which means you can pick which date you'd like to make their payment. We should be able to find a solution for most of our Customer-Owners so please call to discuss.



What are the benefits to this new schedule?

By making the process more efficient, we are able to absorb a meter reading position. This allows us to reallocate work load and responsibilities to other areas of the utility thereby reducing costs and increasing efficiency for EPUD and our Customer-Owners.

In addition to decreasing our expenses, we're also able to improve our communication with our Customer-Owners. This new schedule allows us to create a reading and billing schedule through 2010 which means we can tell our customers exactly when their bill will be generated. We've created a new tool on our website that allows you to enter you account number and instantly receive your upcoming billing dates. You will be able to access this information by visiting our website or contacting a Customer Service Representative. We hope that by providing this information in advance, it will allow you to plan ahead and budget accordingly.

How did we notify our Customer-Owners of this change?

- On September 11th, we began utilizing our Phone Master system to call our customers. Each customer with a valid phone number in our system received a call informing them of the upcoming changes. The call was a recording stating that they might receive their October billing statement during a different time of the month and it encourages them to visit our website or contact us with additional questions.
- We have placed an article in the October PowerLines explaining the changes to our reading schedule and how it may impact their bill.
- We placed ads in some of the local newspapers within our service area to explain the upcoming changes.
- We have published information on our webpage and eBill site explaining the changes.

