

ARTICLE 10

Meter Tampering/Misuse/Fraud (Revised June 30, 2024)

Section 1. Meter Interference Prohibited. In an attempt to ensure the safety of the public and employees, and in an attempt to deter theft/fraud, meter installations shall be strictly the responsibility of the Cooperative. No person, without the expressed consent of the Cooperative, shall alter, remove, or work on the Cooperative's meter or service equipment. Any interference, diversion, unauthorized or fraudulent use of the Cooperative's electric service is prohibited; this includes bypassing, tampering, unauthorized connection, fraud, and computer hacking. Prohibited use shall also include any usage not in accordance with the terms and conditions of the rate schedules or anything that results in unmetered electric service.

Section 2. Meters Sealed by Cooperative. All metering installations shall be sealed by the Cooperative. Only Cooperative representatives are authorized to break or reseal meter installations. Emergency breaking of seals is authorized, but the Cooperative must be notified on the next regular workday following the emergency, and the reasons for such action must be given. Enerstar meter seals shall not be furnished to others, including electricians.

The Cooperative reserves the right to disconnect service to investigate instances of suspected meter tampering in order to conduct a safe and thorough investigation. The Cooperative also reserves the right to run a new credit assessment when the account is reconnected as a result of meter tampering which may result in an increase in the deposit required for the member's account.

In the case of meters found with broken or missing seals where there is no evidence of unauthorized use of service or damage to Cooperative property, a letter may be issued apprising the member of the discovery, the dangers involved, and the consequences of future occurrences. Additionally, a Securing and Resealing Fee of \$100.00 will be assessed to the member's account. Repeat occurrences may result in the meter being secured with a locking device to prevent further tampering. Any damages to the meter will be billed to the member.

In the case of meters found with broken or missing seals where there is evidence of unauthorized use of service or damage to cooperative property the following charges will be applied to the member's account and must be paid prior to reconnecting the service:

- Increased deposit amount if applicable based on credit assessment.
- A Securing and Resealing Fee of \$100.00.
- A Meter Tampering Fee of \$500.00.
- All fixed charges, investigation and repair labor, and out of pocket expenses incurred by the Cooperative related to the meter tampering incident.
- Replacement cost in the event that the meter or other equipment was damaged.
- Estimated kwh that has passed through the meter or by-passed the meter illegally prior to reconnection of the meter. Unmetered kwh shall be estimated by the Cooperative from the best available date and information on file.

- All costs related to collection or litigation including but not limited to reasonable attorney fees.

In the event that the service is reconnected under a different member name, the Cooperative will review transfer to determine if any or all the charges for meter tampering must be paid prior to the service being reconnected. The member will be required to show proof of ownership, proof of legal possession, and/or proof of residency to establish service under their name.

Section 3. Incident Investigation Procedures. When broken or missing seals, or damaged equipment, or unmetered services are found by field personnel, they will be reported to the Supervisor who will begin investigation according to operating procedures developed and administered by management, which include the following:

- Investigating the incident, gathering evidence, interviewing witnesses/members
- Reporting the incident to local law enforcement if management deems necessary
- Recovering revenue (which may include pursuit of a civil lawsuit) of energy, fixed charges, investigation labor, out of pocket expenses, sales tax, damaged or stolen equipment costs, disconnection/reconnection fees, service calls, equipment, labor, trial costs, witness fees, etc.

Civil action may be taken with or without filing criminal charges.