

From dailyhomerentips.com – Posted August 28, 2010

Smart Meters and PowerCost Monitor

OK, so you went ahead and like us installed a [PowerCost Monitor](#) to provide you with real time information on the amount of electricity consumed in your home. Armed with this information, you found that you were more pro-active in reducing the amount of electricity used in your home.

Then, also like us, you received the notice that your local electric utility was soon going to be switching your electric meter to a [Smart Meter](#).

Will your PowerCost Monitor still work once it was already configured for a different type of electric meter?

Well, the answer is 'Yes'. What follows is what I did to reconfigure my PowerCost Monitor to work with a Smart Meter after I had it working on an electromechanical (i.e. old fashioned non-Smart Meter).

First I went to the PowerCost Monitor web site and accessed their on-line [installation guide](#).

Next, since it had been about 9 to 10 months since I first installed this [energy saving](#) device I proceeded to change the AA batteries in both the Display Unit as well as the Sensor Unit as shown in the picture below:



Next, I determined the type of Smart Meter which was installed for my home. I knew it was not, per the installation guide, Type 1 being the Electromechanical meter which was the old Type 1 used to have that had been replaced.

Now, I needed per the instructions to find the optical port. To be sure, I simply printed this one page from the installation guide, took it outside with me so I had it when I looked at the electric meter to be certain. At first I could not find it.

Then, I noticed that there was an additional picture on the page I printed which showed that for some meters there may be two, side by side, optical ports. This was my situation as you can see from the picture below. Per the instructions, I needed to measure the distance from the outer rim to the port which was on the inside; i.e. the furthest away from the outer rim.



For me, it measured exactly 1.5 inches which meant I had a Type 2 meter as defined by the guide.

I then wrote down the Power Factor which, again, per the guide, is the number beside the letters Ks (for me); in my case it was 1.0 as shown in the picture above.

Next, I found my most recent electric bill from my local utility and found the rates per KWh, which is based not on time of use (yet) but two tiered based on volume (amount used).

I then followed the instructions to (re) configure the Display Unit using all of the above data.

Previously, because I used to have the Type 1 Electromechanical electric meter, the Sensor Arm was pulled as far as it would go out from the Sensor Unit.



Following the instructions I opened the Sensor Arm Latch and pushed the Sensor Arm all the way back into the body of the Sensor Unit.



I then took both the Display Unit and the Sensor Unit back outside and installed it on the Smart Meter. I placed the PowerCost Monitor Sensor Unit over the Smart Meter so that the dark red LED light bulb within the Sensor Arm was directly over the optical port on the meter.



Then, I pressed the RESET button and after a few seconds the STATUS indicator started flashing to indicate that the Sensor Unit has detected the signal from the Smart Meter.



Lastly, following the instructions, I pressed and held the PROG/SYNC button on the Display Unit until I received two beeps.

Nothing happened. The Display unit was still not picking up the signal.

Other than putting in a second set of new batteries I started from scratch.

Still nothing.

I contacted the PowerCost Monitor Customer Support on the phone who took down my information and situation. Shortly I was contacted by a technical support person.

Long story short. it was user error why I could not get the PowerCost Monitor's Display unit to pick up the reconfigured Sensor unit's signal. While I did everything correct per the installation manual, I failed on the last step. I did not hold down the PROG/SYNCH button at the top of the Display Unit long enough. Once I did (about 15 seconds or so) then the Display Unit showed, per the instructions, the ID.

Once I did this, I then pressed the reset button one final time on the Sensor unit which was on the Smart Meter and the connection was made.

So, yes, you can reconfigure the PowerCost Monitor to work on a different type of electric meter if, as was our situation, your local electric utility changes your electric meter after you purchase the PowerCost Monitor.

And yes, it will work on Smart Meters.

Of course, both of the above assumes that the new electric meter is one which will work with the PowerCost Monitor. Apparently there are a few models which do not. Their customer support has the full and current list if you are not sure.

So, all's well that end's well. Now, let me see who has that light on in the room that is

- **Featured Energy Conservation Products Used In Our Home**

EZ SNAP EXTERIOR WINDOW SOLAR SHADES



As we wrote [in this article two years ago now](#) this screen-like energy conservation product reduced the sun's UV rays entering our home so much that it caused our digital thermometer's temperature reading to actually

and keep it much cooler inside our home.

To read about and see pictures of our own installation experiences with EZ Snap, simply select this link to our [EZ SNAP exterior window blinds series of articles](#).

For more information, you can also visit the EZ Snap Direct web site at www.ezsnapdirect.com.

POWERCOST MONITOR



This very easy to install electrical conservation device provides both usage and cost data for electricity used in a home within a very large display unit **in real time**.

The PowerCost Monitor's Display unit can be placed more anywhere in the home to provide the visual reminder to check for and turn off unnecessary lights, unused video game units, bathroom fans, or

For more information on this proven electricity saving device, simply select this link to the [Blue Line Innovations](#) web site or visit retailers like The Source.ca and Frys.com. To read and see how we installed this device in our own home, simply access our recent [PowerCost Monitor](#) articles.

SANIDRY DEHUMIDIFIER



Last year we started to use the SaniDry Dehidifier in our home to reduce the humidity levels during the summer which in turn allowed us to feel comfortable at higher temperatures with dryer air and thus reduce our electric bill from using less air conditioning.

Previously we used two smaller dehumidifiers which ran continuously and still did not keep humidity levels as low as the one SaniDry.

For more information about this product you can access the [dehumidifier page](#) on the vendor's web site. Or to see how the unit was installed and is used in our home, you can access our project series on the [SaniDry Dehumidifier](#).