



10 Questions to Ask Before Signing a Sub-Metering Contract

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Entering into a Submetering and Billing Service Agreement is a big commitment for condominium boards. Before you commit your building to one supplier, it is important to ask a few basic questions:

IS THE METERING SYSTEM MEASUREMENT CANADA APPROVED?

Measurement Canada is an agency of Industry Canada and is the organization responsible for ensuring the integrity and accuracy of measurement in the Canadian marketplace. It develops and administers the laws and requirements governing measurement; evaluates, approves and certifies measuring devices and investigates complaints of inaccurate measurement. If you are installing meters for billing purposes, they must be Measurement Canada certified. For information on Measurement Canada, visit www.mc.ic.gc.ca.

HOW MANY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE DOES THE METER VENDOR HAVE?

It is important to ask your potential Sub-metering supplier how long they have been in business. Do they specialize in Sub-metering or are they primarily a utility distribution company? How many buildings have they Sub-metered?

HOW MANY YEARS DOES THE METER VENDOR GUARANTEE THE AVAILABILITY OF PARTS AND SUPPORT?

Where are the meters manufactured? If you require upgrades or repairs for your meters, can this be easily done by the Sub-metering provider or will you be referred to a third party manufacturer for any issues? Do they guarantee

their system will not become obsolete?

IS MEASUREMENT CANADA RE-VERIFICATION OF THE METERING INCLUDED?

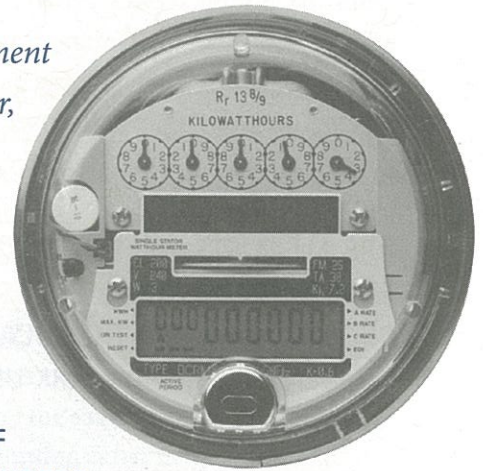
Measurement Canada mandates that all metering systems that are used to bill customers must be re-verified for accuracy. Be sure to ask if your Submetering agreement includes this.

DOES THE METER SYSTEM DESIGN ALLOW FOR "PLUG-AND-PLAY" UPGRADES?

Plug-and-Play upgrades allow a Sub-metering system to never become obsolete or out-dated. Some Sub-metering systems cannot be upgraded easily without costly parts and additional labour costs.

ARE THE SERVICE AND BILLING FEES CLEARLY OUTLINED FOR THE TERM OF THE AGREEMENT?

Many billing service providers guarantee that their fees will not increase by more than the Local Distribution Company (LDC). Ask your billing service provider to detail the rate increase structure for the duration of the agreement for like services.



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DOES THE METER VENDOR AND BILLING SERVICE PROVIDER HAVE REFERENCES YOU CAN SPEAK WITH?

Any reputable service provider should be willing to supply you with references so you can verify their level of professionalism and customer service.

IS THE BILLING SERVICE PROVIDER LICENSED BY THE ONTARIO ENERGY BOARD?

Does the Billing service provider follow the guidelines and regulations of the Ontario Energy Board? Asking this question ensures you are doing business with a reputable service provider that is licensed with the OEB and is familiar with their codes.

ARE ALL COSTS FOR ELECTRICITY, DISTRIBUTION, TRANSMISSION AND ADMINISTRATION PASSED DIRECTLY ON FROM THE LOCAL UTILITY TO RESIDENTS WITH NO MARK UP?

Ask if the condominium corporation will be allowed to pick and choose its own commodity suppliers for fixed electricity contracts. Will you be charged residential or bulk multi-unit rates, which are less expensive to condominium corporations and residents? Do they provide detailed breakdowns to the condominium corporation so you can see that electricity is not being marked-up?

Most questions surround the resident billing. Don't forget to ask about how the common areas are billed. The billing of the common area is just as important as the resident billing. Ensure you know how this is calculated.

Sub-metering and billing service agreements can range from 1 to 25 years. Condominium Boards and Property Managers should know what the costs are going to be over the life of an agreement – not just the fee that appears on their monthly bills. ■

Margaret Manetta is the Marketing Coordinator for Carma Industries Inc. Carma is a Canadian owned and operated manufacturer and distributor of utility submetering and billing solutions for the multi-residential, commercial and educational markets, with close to 200,000 meters installed across the country.



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