

Household Wiring and Meter Tampering

One issue that comes up every year at AVEC's annual meeting is home electrical wiring and where AVEC's responsibility ends and the consumer's responsibility begins.

As clearly outlined in AVEC's tariff, all household wiring is the responsibility of the homeowner – not AVEC. Our linemen are not qualified to work on house wiring. Certified electricians are required to work on the wiring to meet codes and ensure everybody's safety. AVEC does not hire electricians.

The following information should help our members understand what their responsibilities are and where AVEC's responsibility ends. This is important to understand especially since we are switching over to electronic meters and will not connect any new meters unless the service entrance is up to code.

The meter installed on any AVEC service is the property of AVEC. The meter socket it plugs into and all the facilities attached to the outside of the house (or building), collectively called the service entrance, belong to the customer.

AVEC's point of connection to the service is at the spliced wires at the customer's weather head. The customer is responsible for installing and maintaining all house wiring, including the service entrance. AVEC is responsible for making the connection at the weather head and installing the meter to complete the connection.

Consumers also need to realize they should not be removing AVEC meters. Our tariff clearly states that there are fines and possible imprisonment for removing seals or tampering with AVEC's meters.

Excerpts from AVEC's Tariff:

4.11 Tampering with Utility Property

Tampering with meters and other facilities of the Utility (AVEC) violates this tariff, and more seriously, is a criminal offense under Alaska Law Section 49.5.12, ACLA 1949. The statutory penalty is a maximum of six months imprisonment, a fine or \$500.00 or both such imprisonment and fine.

The statute authorizes the Utility to collect from the guilty party three times its damages as a result of such tampering. In addition to the penalties which might be imposed by civil suit, the Utility will impose, as a penalty, a minimum fee of \$25.00 up to \$85.00 against any person who breaks a meter seal without authorization or otherwise tampers with Utility facilities and, in flagrant cases, electric utility service will be discontinued.

4.12 Customer's Wiring and Equipment

The customer shall install, own and maintain all wiring and equipment beyond the point of delivery except meters and special facilities installed or furnished by the Utility. The customer's wiring shall conform to applicable municipal, Borough or local, and state requirements, the Utility's tariff, and accepted modern standards as exemplified by the National Electric Code and the National Electric Safety Code.

The customer shall furnish and install an underwriter's approved meter or sockets (as specified by the Utility) for the installation of the Utility's metering equipment. If in-

strument transformers are required, the customer shall furnish and install mounting brackets or a suitable enclosure with the necessary conduit as specified by the Utility.

7.07 Customer Equipment Installation Standards

(a) Customers are responsible for their inside wiring, including the service entrance at the point of Utility attachment and meter socket.

(b) Customers are responsible for installing and maintaining his/her electrical wiring and equipment in a safe manner in accordance with applicable local, state and national electric and building codes.

(c) Customer equipment, wiring and devices connected to the Utility system will be used for the intended use and in conformance to standards of Underwriter's Laboratories, Inc., and other nationally recognized standards as required. See Section 7.03.

(d) Customers will install reduced voltage starting systems on all motors exceeding four horsepower or 34 KVA starting in rush unless alternate installation is approved in writing by the Utility. Any motor installation which causes service voltage flicker shall be required to have a reduced voltage starting system installed. If across the line starting is initially permitted, the customer shall later be required to install reduced voltage starting, at their expense if it becomes necessary.

(e) Customers are responsible for installing and maintaining electrical wiring and equipment in a safe manner in accordance with applicable local, state, and national electric and building codes.