

For February 24th

Electrical power meters

Lets talk about that little round power meter that hangs on the back or side of your house, the one that costs you so much money each month. Over the last few years we have been working closely with Epcor and Fortis to repair the power meter sockets (the metal boxes that the power meters fit into) that become defective for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the problem is caused by nature and sometimes it's human error.

I got a phone call from Calgary today, from a woman who said that her elderly mom in Edmonton needed our help. She said her mom was in the yard when all of a sudden the power meter blew up. Her mom was unhurt, but a bit shaken by this. After the Epcor trouble truck left, her mom found that because of the explosion, she was left with only half of her normal power. She is unable to use any of the 240 volt appliances such as the stoves or dryer. Being an elderly person living on her own, this was obviously a bit of an inconvenience.

In Edmonton, Epcor over the last few months, have been changing the old glass dial meters, to the new smart meters. This new technology will allow your monthly consumption calculation to be read from the downtown offices. Unfortunately, with the replacement of the old meters, a problem has been created. Those wonderful people who braved the inclement weather to walk from house to house reading your old power meters, are no longer required.

One problem that occurs when the old meter is removed and a new one put in it's place, is that the internal parts of the old meter sockets may have become brittle over time and could break. If this happens, they have to be repaired in order for the supply authority to provide you with power.

Another problem I wanted to talk about, is caused when the earth around you house settles or shifts. After approximately 1966, most of the electrical power for your homes, was supplied by underground conductors. These wires are supplied from the "power grid" provided by the city. The wires are normally buried between 30" and 45" deep. At the building, they are protected by a conduit to connect them to the meter socket. A very important part of installing these wires underground, is that an "S Loop" must be installed directly below the meter. This is a method of installing the wires, to prevent them from being pulled down once the ground settles. If this happens, there is a lot of strain put on the connections inside the meter socket, usually causing breakage or in severe cases, an explosion.

Sometimes, the conduit is pulled from the meter socket along with the wires, exposing the energized conductors. This is a very serious safety concern to have in your back yard. Because this equipment is part of your service, you are responsible to maintain it. If you find this has happened to your service, call Robart Electrical Services and have it repaired.

