



SOUTH DAKOTA/NEBRASKA

New Service Guide

NorthWestern[®]
Energy
Delivering a Bright Future

Construction centers

If you're building a new home or performing any construction that requires a change to your existing electric or gas service, it's important you contact one of NorthWestern Energy's construction centers. Our helpful staff will work with you to initiate any construction project and will be available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to answer questions. Please use the list below to contact the office nearest you.

Contacts

Call our new construction hotline to be routed to your local area: 83-FOR-BUILD (833-672-8453)

Email: ccsdne@support.northwestern.com

Or visit us in person at one of the following addresses:

SOUTH DAKOTA

Aberdeen Area

113 S Centennial St
Aberdeen, SD 57401

Brookings Area

1232 22nd Avenue South
Brookings, SD 57006

Huron Area

600 Market St W
Huron, SD 57350

Mitchell Area

300 S Burr
Mitchell, SD 57301

Yankton Area (includes Sioux Falls, Tea & Harrisburg)

313 Cedar
Yankton, SD 57078

NEBRASKA

Grand Island Area

612 S Webb Rd.
Grand Island, NE 68803

Kearney Area

1023 E 25th St
Kearney, NE 68847

North Platte Area

215 E Fifth
North Platte, NE 69101

Customer contact center

Once your service is installed, NorthWestern Energy Customer Contact Center's friendly representatives can take care of your requests and answer any questions you might have about your account. Please give us a call, and we will be happy to assist you with most service-related requests, including:

- Connecting or disconnecting your service
- Reporting any problems with your service
- Updating account information
- Bill related inquiries
- Payment options
- Budget billing information
- Group billing
- Property owner/manager agreements
- Credit related inquiries

Customer Contact Center

Phone: (800) 245-6977

Electric and Gas Emergencies

Phone: (800) 245-6977

The Customer Contact Center is staffed Monday through Friday during the hours of 7 a.m. through 6 p.m.

For Electric and Gas Emergencies, this number is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Customer Service Contacts | |
| New Construction Guidelines | 2 |
| Step 1 - Service Request | 2 |
| Step 2 - Estimate Preparation | 2 |
| Step 3 - Site Preparation | 2-3 |
| New Electric Construction Guidelines..... | 4 |
| Charges for Electric Service..... | 4 |
| Inspections and Permits..... | 4 |
| Electric Metering Standards..... | 4 |
| Temporary Electric Service | 5-6 |
| Permanent Residential Service | 6 |
| Work on Existing Utilities | 7 |
| New Natural Gas Construction Guidelines | 8 |
| Charges for Natural Gas Service | 8 |
| Inspection and Permits | 8 |
| Gas Metering Standards | 8 |
| Customer Buried Piping..... | 9 |
| Basic Guidelines for Appliance Installation | 9 |
| Mobile Homes..... | 10 |
| Customer Trenching Guidelines | 10 |
| General..... | 10 |
| Electric..... | 10 |
| Trench Dimensions, Burial Depths and Clearance..... | 11 |
| Guidelines for Electrical Equipment Clearances | 12 |
| Guidelines for Tree Planting..... | 13 |
| Rules of Thumb for Tree Planting..... | 13 |
| Rules of Thumb for Planting Shrubs and Bushes | 13 |
| Please Be Safe! Call Before You Dig..... | 13 |
| Trimming Existing Trees..... | 13 |
| Want More Information? | 13 |
| New Service Checklist | 14 |
| Application for New Service | 15 |

New construction guidelines

At NorthWestern Energy, we're committed to providing you with the fastest, most convenient service possible when installing your new electric or gas service. We understand that new construction and major renovation projects require considerable up-front planning to ensure jobs run smoothly. Part of that planning includes coordinating with us so your new service can be connected in a timely manner.

We ask that you work with us through the construction process by following our electric and gas guidelines. These guidelines begin with a short overview explaining the steps required to efficiently move your service request from initiation to completion. Following this overview are separate electric and natural gas sections that provide you more detailed information on our guidelines and related governmental requirements.

 **Please review this brochure in its entirety.**

If you have additional questions after reading these guidelines, please contact your local Construction Center (see inside front cover). These guidelines, and any updates, can be found on our Website at www.northwesternenergy.com/construction.

Step 1 - Service Request

To initiate your request for an electric or gas service, please review and complete the Construction Application found on the last page in this guide. We require this information to initiate your request for service and to begin planning for installation. Your new service location must have a legal address. Contact your city or county surveyors or planning office to obtain a new address. Note, you are responsible for contacting and arranging for the installation of other utilities, such as phone or cable TV.

For more expedient processing, Applications for Service should be submitted online at <http://northwesternenergy.com/account-services/new-construction>. Alternatively, the hard-copy application attached to the last page of this guide can be completed and returned by mail, email or in person at one of NorthWestern Energy's Customer Service Center locations. The Customer Service Center locations and contact information are listed on the inside of the front cover of this guide. Once we have received the information requested on the application, we'll enter your information into our system, and your request will progress to step two.

Step 2 - Estimate Preparation

After receiving your application, we will prepare a cost estimate. If the construction site is not located near electric or gas distribution lines, the estimate may include the cost to extend distribution lines to your site. A NorthWestern Energy representative may need to contact you to gather additional information about your requirements. Once the estimate is complete, we will notify you of any required costs. For an explanation of standard charges, please refer to Charges for Electric Services and Charges for Natural Gas Services found within this document.



A signed Customer Agreement and any costs, paid in full, must be received before NorthWestern Energy can proceed with the project. Also, in order to create your customer account, we will need to process personal information prior to activating your service(s). This information is only required if you proceed with construction. If a customer account is needed, we are available Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. at 800-245-6977 or stop by one of our convenient walk-in offices; hours may vary; go to NorthWesternEnergy.com for more information.

Step 3 - Site Preparation

Before we can install service to your building, you're responsible for preparing the site as follows:

- Clear trees, brush, dirt piles, building materials and other obstructions from the right-of-way and service/trench route.
- Local or state permits may need to be obtained by the customer if electric service trench route is in public right-of-way.
- According to state law, an electrical permit must be obtained prior to the installation of the electric meter.
- NorthWestern Energy will not install electric or gas services until the surface has been backfilled, compacted and graded to within 6 inches of a permanent established elevation. Note: Excessive settlement due to lack of proper compacting could cause damage to utility service lines.
- NorthWestern Energy will not install electric service conductors until the meter base or meter pedestal has been installed and is ready to be energized.
- Identify your property pins and mark property boundary with stakes or flags.
- The building's foundation must be completed or the site must show evidence of construction in progress.
- On a multi-plex with multi-socket (ganged) meter bases, individual sockets and outside and inside panels must be tagged with durable metal placards indicating the apartment or unit number served by the meter. See Electric Metering Standards within this document.
- Your gas or electric meters must be protected from snow and ice falling from a roof, drain water or other causes of damage. Supplemental protection may be required if the location selected does not offer adequate protection.
- Electric and/or gas meters cannot be installed inside porches or under decks less than 5 feet in height. Meters must remain accessible at all times.
- If the electric service route will cross under concrete, a PVC conduit for the service will be required. (Your project engineer will specify the requirements.)

New construction guidelines (cont.)

- Identify septic systems, drain fields, sprinkler systems and other underground facilities that may impact our service route.
- Identify any future building plans such as driveways, decks, patios, landscaping or fencing that might interfere with the location of your electric or gas installation.

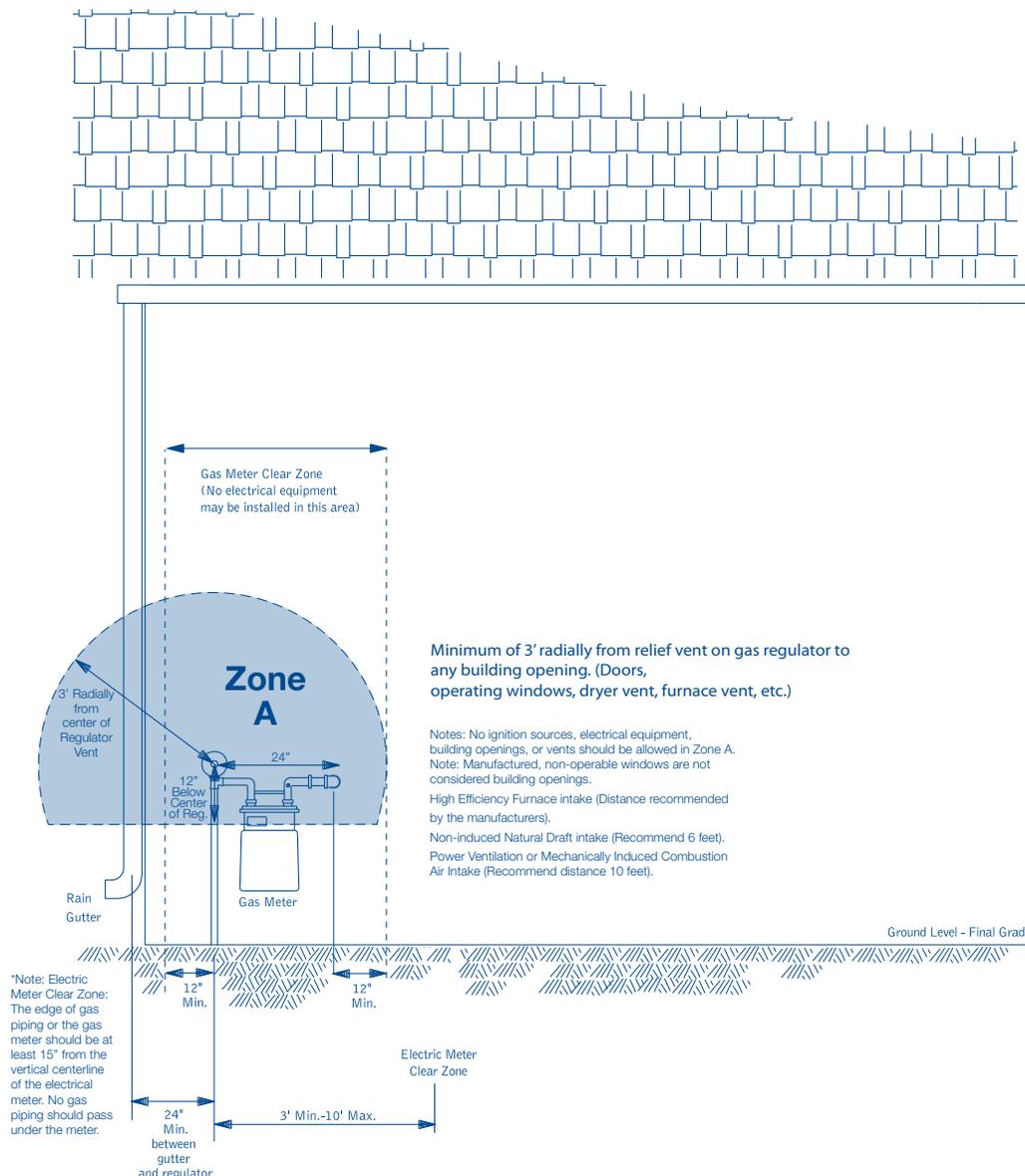
After the foundation is backfilled, properly compacted and the service route is to grade (final ground level), please contact your local NorthWestern Energy representative or Construction Center to schedule installation of service.

If requesting service for a commercial project, a detailed site plan is required, including electric and gas load information.

Physically locate and mark on your site any underground facilities you own prior to service installation. (NorthWestern Energy is not responsible for damage to any unmarked facilities.)

⚠ Contacting the Construction Center at this time is very important, because your service installation cannot be scheduled until you or your contractor have notified us that your construction site is ready.

Meter Set Location - Gas and Electric



New electric construction guidelines

The following guidelines are intended to provide a general overview of the requirements for a new service. Because each construction project is different, we encourage you to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your project. Please contact the Construction Center Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. at (833) 672-8453 or stop by one of our convenient walk-in offices, hours may vary; go to NorthWesternEnergy.com for more information.

Charges for New Electric Service

For underground electric services, NorthWestern Energy will install underground facilities to extend a service line without charge to the extent of 150 feet of cable along the shortest feasible route from the distribution line to the point of service attachment.

For underground electric services requiring more than 150 feet of cable, the customer will make a non-refundable contribution of \$1.00 per foot exceeding the 150 feet.

For underground electric services, the customer will arrange and pay for all trenching and backfilling, consistent with NorthWestern Energy's specifications that are required for installation of the underground service line. In addition, the customer will provide or pay NorthWestern Energy for any conduits or fittings used in the installation of such service line. Some installations may require Contribution and Aid of Construction (CIAC).

In instances where a CIAC is required, three years after the project has been completed, NorthWestern will review the three-year average use. If actual volumes vary from projected volumes by 20% or more, NorthWestern will charge or credit the customer for the variance, without interest, in projected CIAC.

You may be charged for additional construction work that is not included in the standard line extension and service, such as frozen ground. If this additional work is required after the initial payment has been made, the additional charges must be paid prior to the meter being set.

In addition to costs associated with installation, you are responsible for any private roadway, landscape or vegetation restoration after the service is installed.

Inspections and Permits

According to South Dakota law, you must obtain and provide our Construction Center a copy of an electrical permit for all projects involving electrical wiring. To obtain an electrical wiring permit, contact the South Dakota Electrical Commission at 1-800-233-7765 or 605-773-3573. Many local governments also require inspection of customer wiring before NorthWestern Energy can energize your service.

All new or remodeled installations must conform to applicable provisions of the National Electric Code (NEC), National Electrical Safety Code (NESC), State of South Dakota rules and regulations, city and county ordinances and codes, and rules on file with or issued by the South Dakota Public Utility Commission.

Electric Metering Standards

NorthWestern Energy reserves the right to specify the location of our meters. Please consult with the Construction Center regarding location of meters for service conversions.

Electric meters must have a minimum working space of 30 inches wide across the front of the meter base and a 36-inch clear zone in front of the meter. The electric meter height must be a minimum of 5 feet above the finished grade but no more than 6 feet, and located a minimum of 6 inches from the edge of the building. Mobile home pedestals must be a minimum of 42 inches above the finished grade and located within 30 feet of the home. Please see the "Meter Set Location" diagram shown on page 5 for an illustration of these requirements.

On all new or remodeled multiple-occupancy buildings, each building or premise must be individually metered. Any exceptions require the approval of NorthWestern Energy and possibly the State Commission, prior to the start of construction. Each building or premise must have its address and unit numbers permanently attached to the unit doors, the meter bases, and the individual apartment/unit breaker boxes prior to the installation of the meters. Your contractor must be present when the electric meter is initially set to verify the meter corresponds to the correct premises. Permanent meter bases must be properly secured to the building.



South Dakota - All residential meter bases must have meter sockets rated a minimum of 200 amps for underground service or 100 amps for overhead service, and must have a lever-actuated bypass.

Meter base lugs must be able to accept a minimum of 4/0 aluminum wire. All meter bases must be approved by NorthWestern Energy. Your local electrical supply company can provide you with approved meter bases.

All residential and non-residential metering must meet the following standards:

- 200 amp minimum meter socket rating with a buss bar type meter base. Exceptions require approval by NorthWestern Energy.
- Services between 0-400 amps typically utilize self-contained metering.
- Services greater than 400 amps (320 amps continuous) utilize current transformer (CT) metering.

New electric construction guidelines (cont.)

Temporary Electric Service

Where feasible, NorthWestern Energy offers temporary service for new construction. If you require temporary construction power, contact your Construction Center for additional information and cost estimate. In overhead or underground distribution areas, NorthWestern Energy can connect a metered temporary service.

In overhead distribution areas, if you install an approved temporary service pole and associated hardware within 100 feet of an approved NorthWestern Energy pole, we can install a meter and connect service. A NorthWestern Energy Representative must approve the assembly, compaction and installation of the pole.

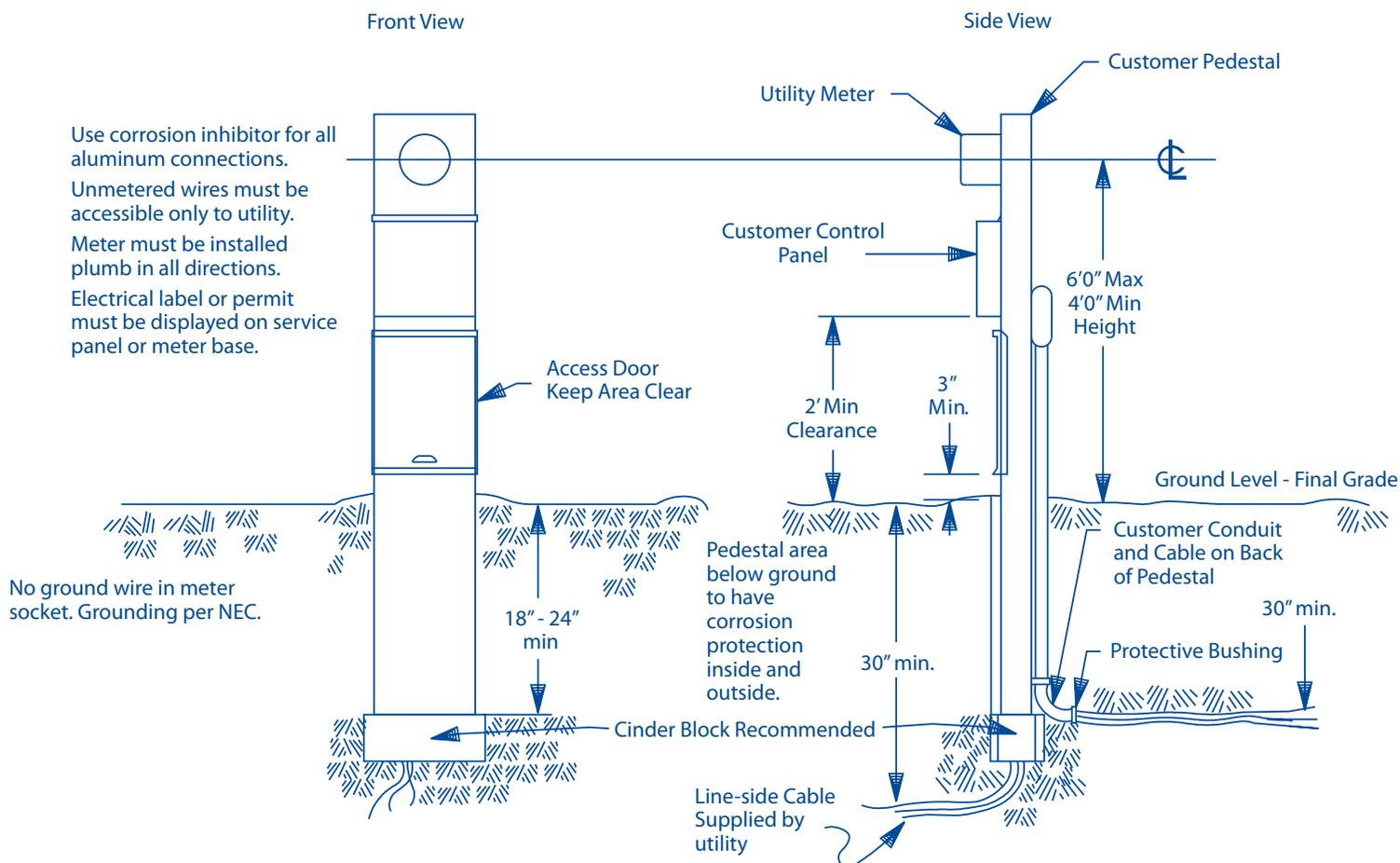
In underground distribution areas, if you install a temporary

meter pedestal within 5 feet of a pad-mount ground transformer or secondary pole, we can install a meter and connect service. If metered temporary installation is required when ground is frozen, it will be the requester's responsibility to thaw the ground.

Early Permanent — If your schedule allows more time between your service request and installation deadline, you may want to consider an early permanent service.

The early permanent option is only available for underground service. It requires the completion of your foundation, and allows an underground service to be installed prior to construction or completion of your building. The meter pedestal (for mobile homes) or meter base must be installed at its final location and comply with the electric meter specifications outlined in the previous section. For a diagram of the mounting requirements, please see the "Underground Service Installation" diagram below.

Underground Service - Pedestal Installation



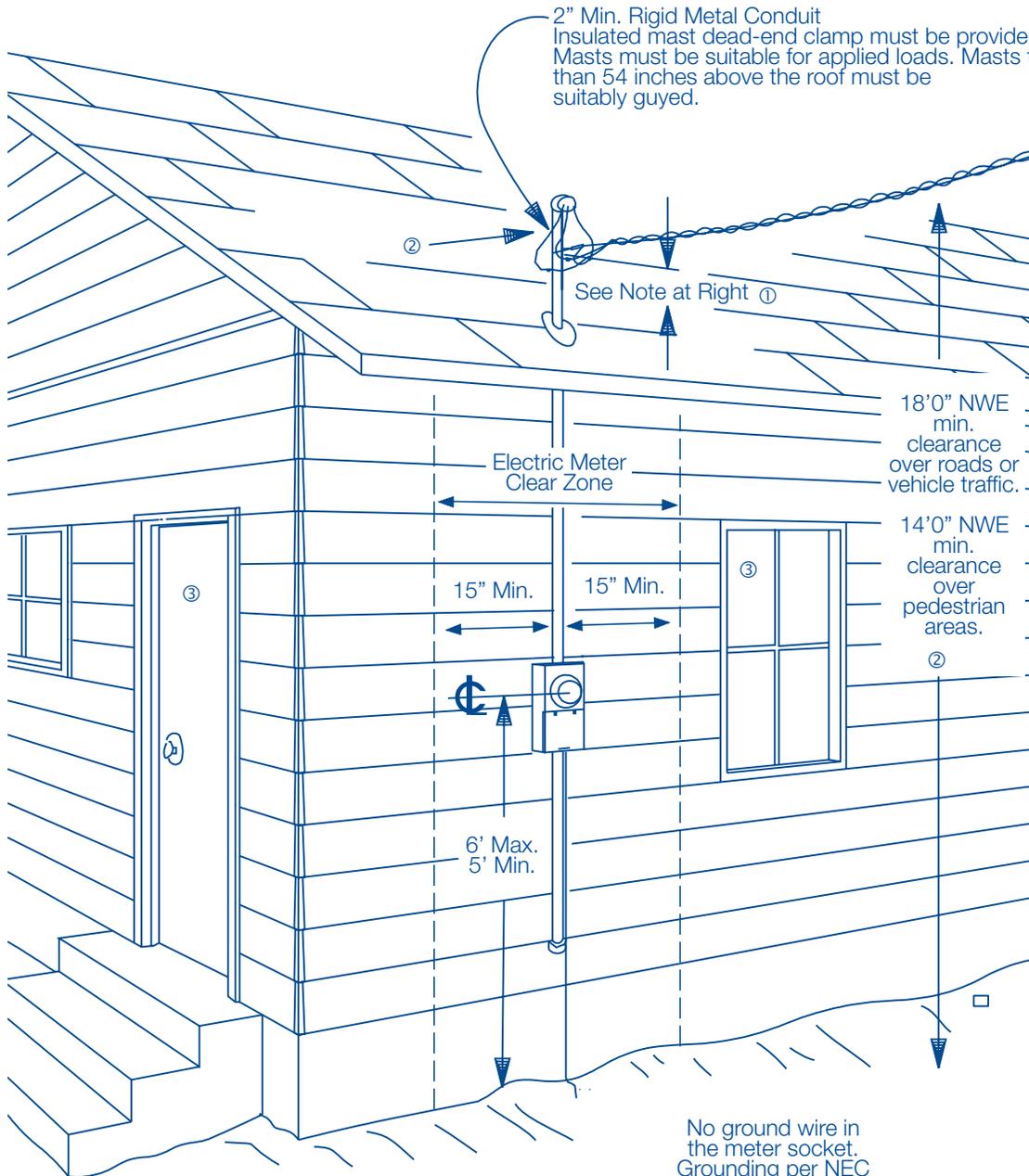
New electric construction guidelines (cont.)

Regardless of which temporary service option you choose, please be safe. South Dakota law requires you to locate all utilities on your dig site before you begin digging for your temporary service pole or meter pedestal. You can have utilities located free of charge by contacting the National 811 "Call Before You Dig" number. You must contact 811 at least two working days before you plan to dig.

Permanent Residential Services

To aid in preparing for the installation of your electric service, this section provides specifications on the three most common service types for residential services. If you require more detailed specifications, or information on other service types, please contact the Construction Center.

Overhead Service Installation



- NOTE:**
- ① If support mast is located within 4-feet of roof edge, service wire must maintain minimum clearance of 18 inches from roof top within a 6-foot radius around support mast. Beyond 6-foot radius, service wire must maintain minimum clearance of 3-feet from roof top. (NESC minimums)
 - If support mast is located more than 4-feet from roof edge, service wire must maintain minimum clearance of 3-feet from roof top. (NESC minimums)
 - ② Support mast must be tall enough to provide required clearances from ground to service conductors everywhere in the span. Service conductors must not be readily accessible from roof. (Not able to be casually accessed from a door, window, ramp or permanently mounted ladder.)
 - ③ NESC requires a 3-foot minimum clearance from service wire to door, window, fire escape, etc.

New electric construction guidelines (cont.)

Work on Existing Utilities

There may be a charge for conversion of a residential overhead service to an underground service. For underground electric services requiring more than 150 feet of cable, the customer will make a non-refundable contribution of \$1.00 per foot exceeding 150 feet. For underground electric services, the customer will arrange and pay for all trenching and backfilling, consistent with NorthWestern's specifications that are required for installation

of the underground service line. In addition, the customer will provide any conduits or fittings under hard surfaces and at the house used in the installation of such service line. Consult with NorthWestern Energy regarding conduit requirements. If you require relocation work to accommodate new construction on your property, the relocation charge will be based on the estimated project cost. You are responsible for any landscape or vegetation restoration.



New natural gas construction guidelines

These guidelines are intended to provide a general overview of the requirements for a new gas service. Because each construction project is different, we encourage you to contact us with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your project. Please contact the Construction Center at (833) 672-8453 or visit your local office.

Charges for Natural Gas Service

To all customers requesting a new gas service, NorthWestern Energy will initiate a feasibility study to determine if the cost to install the natural gas line extension is feasible. This study will take into consideration the total cost of serving the customer and the expected revenue from the customer. If NorthWestern determines the extension of service to the customer is economically feasible, NorthWestern may require a Contribution in Aid of Construction (CIAC) from the customer. In the event of frozen ground, there may be an additional cost to install the gas service line or installation of the gas service line may not be possible until ground conditions change. Please contact NorthWestern Energy to request a cost estimate for your gas service.

In instances where a CIAC is required, three years after the project has been completed, NorthWestern will review the three-year average use. If actual volumes vary from projected volumes by 20% or more, NorthWestern will charge or credit the customer for the variance, without interest, in projected CIAC.

Inspection and Permits

All natural gas piping systems must be pressure tested prior to use. The contractor or property owner is responsible for establishing the pressure test. The standard test requires the system be subjected to 10-20 pounds of air pressure, depending on local requirements (displayed on a 30-psi gauge) for at least 15 minutes. This test must be witnessed by a local inspector or a NorthWestern Energy representative. Prior to testing, all appliances should be disconnected and capped at all shut-off valves.

When a meter bar is provided with the natural gas riser, your contractor must connect the gas piping directly to the meter bar. The system can then be pressure tested through the 1/4 inch tap on the meter bar. The meter bar must be level after piping is connected.

You may be required to obtain a permit to have your appliances and piping inspected before NorthWestern Energy can set a meter and turn on gas. After testing, permits and inspections have been completed, contact us for installation of the gas meter.

Gas Metering Standards

NorthWestern Energy reserves the right to specify the location of our meters. All meters are to be located outside. Please consult with the NorthWestern Energy representative regarding location of meters for service conversions. NorthWestern Energy requires a minimum 4-foot clear zone in front of the gas meter. Please see the "Meter Set Location" diagram within this document for an illustration of these requirements. Be sure the meter and associated equipment are suitably protected from falling ice, snow, or water.

On all new or remodeled multiple-occupancy buildings, each building or premise must be individually metered. Any exceptions require the approval of NorthWestern Energy and possibly the State Commission, prior to the start of construction. Where multiple meters are to be installed, the piping for each unit or premise must have its address and unit numbers permanently attached to the piping at the meter location.



New natural gas construction guidelines (cont.)

Customer Buried Piping

NorthWestern Energy does not maintain any of the customer's piping, which is downstream of the meter. It is the customer's responsibility to inspect and maintain this piping, including buried lines. If buried piping is not maintained, it may be subject to the potential hazards of corrosion and leaks. If this piping is metallic, it should be periodically inspected for corrosion and promptly repaired if any unsafe condition is discovered. When excavating near buried gas piping, NorthWestern Energy does not locate customer-owned pipe, and the excavation should be done by hand. For downstream-of-the-meter gas piping inquiries, contact a local contractor for advice or assistance. For all gas leaks, contact NorthWestern Energy immediately.

Basic Guidelines for Appliance Installation

Because of the number of different configurations possible under state and national codes, the following sections on Piping, Venting and Combustion Air provide only general requirements. For detailed and complete appliance installation information, please refer to the documentation that came with your appliances as well as the National Fuel Gas Code NFPA 54. If you have additional questions, please contact a local plumbing and heating contractor.

Gas Piping

Piping must be black iron or approved corrugated stainless steel tubing. For public safety, all pipe must be properly installed and supported. The size of the pipe chosen should accommodate the total gas load. Exterior piping must be a minimum 1-inch diameter ridged pipe (NorthWestern Energy requirement) to the first building attachment. All above-ground pipe installed outside must be a minimum of 6 inches above grade.

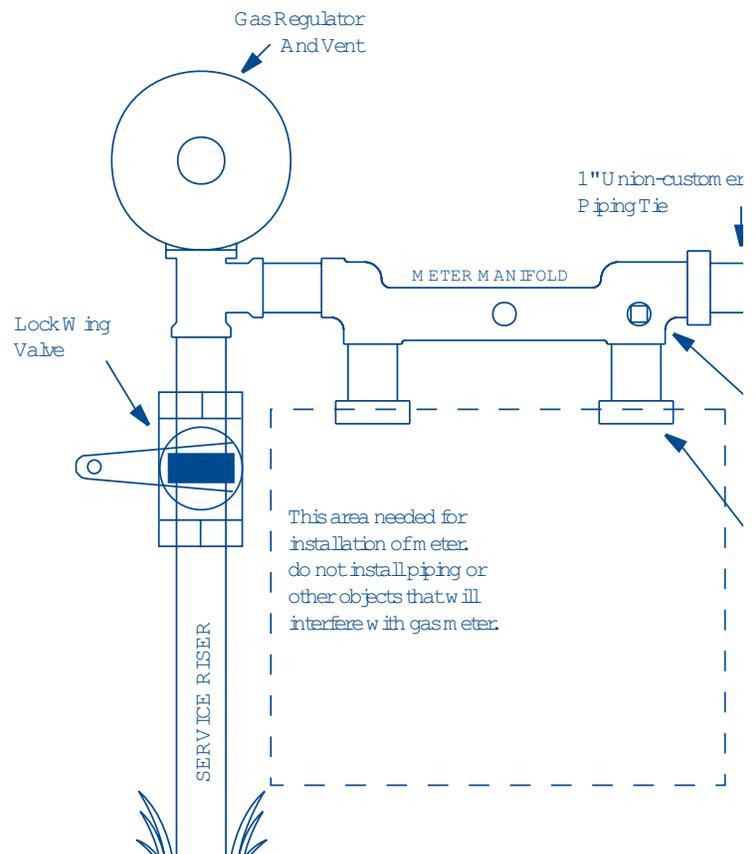
Each appliance must have its own dripleg, American Gas Association-approved shut-off valve and union. This union must be placed between the shut-off valve and appliance. The shut-off valve must be readily accessible and should be installed as per governing codes.

Venting and Combustion Air Requirements

Please consult the manufacturer's installation instructions or the National Fuel Gas Code or NFPA 54 (whichever applies to your location).



Meter Bar Installation



New natural gas construction guidelines (cont.)

Mobile Homes

For reasons of public safety, we encourage you to have the mobile home on site before our gas service will be installed. The mobile home must be properly elevated, blocked and secured before gas will be turned on.

All gas appliances must be approved for mobile home use. If gas appliances are being converted from propane to natural gas, all pilot and burner orifices of proper size for natural gas combustion must be supplied and installed by the customer. A pressure test also is required at this time, as described in the "Inspections and Permits" section within this document.

The customer must provide a certified mobile home flexible connector from the mobile home piping to the meter. The minimum diameter of the pipe stubbed out from a mobile home is 3/4 inch.

Customer Trenching Guidelines

General

This section is intended to give customers a general overview of the appropriate guidelines for digging and backfilling trenches associated with the installation of electric, gas and communications utilities.

- Customers requesting underground installation, a re-route, or conversion of natural gas and/or electric distribution facilities must contact the Construction Center. A NorthWestern Energy representative will work with the customer to design, specify and schedule each project.
- The customer or customer's contractor can provide excavations for the installation of an electric distribution facility. However, utility requirements and federal regulations can limit the activity. Please work closely with a NorthWestern representative if you are considering customer-provided trenching.
- The excavation route will be determined and staked by the NorthWestern Energy representative. Changes in routing must be approved by a NorthWestern representative prior to excavation.
- The customer shall provide all required permits from appropriate governmental agencies for the construction work and installation of NorthWestern's facilities and customer's equipment on customer's premises and the property of third parties. Copies of all permits must be provided to NorthWestern. The customer is responsible for obtaining locates by contacting 811 for all existing underground facilities and accepts the responsibility for any and all damages associated with the excavation and backfill.

- The customer is responsible for determining finished grade and providing excavations that assure the facilities will be installed at the proper depth after finished grade is established.
- For backhoe excavations, spoils must be placed on one side of the trench, a minimum of 2 feet away from the trench, to allow for access to install the cables and/or pipe, and will meet or exceed all OSHA requirements.
- The NorthWestern Energy representative will inspect the excavation prior to installation of facilities.
- The customer is responsible for providing suitable bedding for the installed facilities. The bottom of the trench shall have a smooth grade and be free of rocks, stones or gravel in excess of 1 inch. If this is not possible, a 2-inch thick bed of sand or clean soil shall be placed in the bottom of the trench. Backfill must not contain any sharp or foreign objects, including frozen chunks of ground. Additionally, backfill within 4 inches of any pipe or cable must be free of materials that could damage the pipe or cable. Backfill must be adequately compacted. Backfill within 6 inches of cables or other utilities must be hand compacted; otherwise mechanical compaction is allowed.
- The customer is responsible for surface restoration and trench compaction, including roadbeds, as required by the landowner, responsible engineer or government agency.
- The trench must be backfilled or barricaded upon completion of the installation of NorthWestern Energy facilities.

Electric

- Excavations for electric facilities operating at 600 volts or less (services) must be dug to provide a minimum of 24 inches of cover and a maximum of 30 inches of cover below final finished grade.
- At the request of the NorthWestern Energy representative, the customer will provide a conduit system in the trench to accommodate the conductor(s). The supervisor will specify the type and size of conduits to be installed. All conduits must be either gray or red. Conduit runs must be continuous, and a maximum of four 90-degree turns are allowed. Any elbow must have a minimum radius of 36 inches.

New natural gas construction guidelines (cont.)

Trench Dimensions, Burial Depths and Clearances:

Gas Main Pipeline and Appurtenances:
30 inches (DOT 192.327(b))

Gas Service Pipeline and Appurtenances:
18 inches (DOT 192.361(a))

Electric Primary Cable (601 to 50,000V):
30 inches (NESC Table 352-1)

Electric Secondary Cable (0 to 600V):
24 inches (NESC Table 352-1)

Communications Cable:
24 inches (NESC Table 354C)

Required Separation Clearances between utilities are as follows:

Any Gas to Any Electric:
12 inches (NESC 354A2)

Any Gas to Any Communications:
12 inches (NESC 354A2)

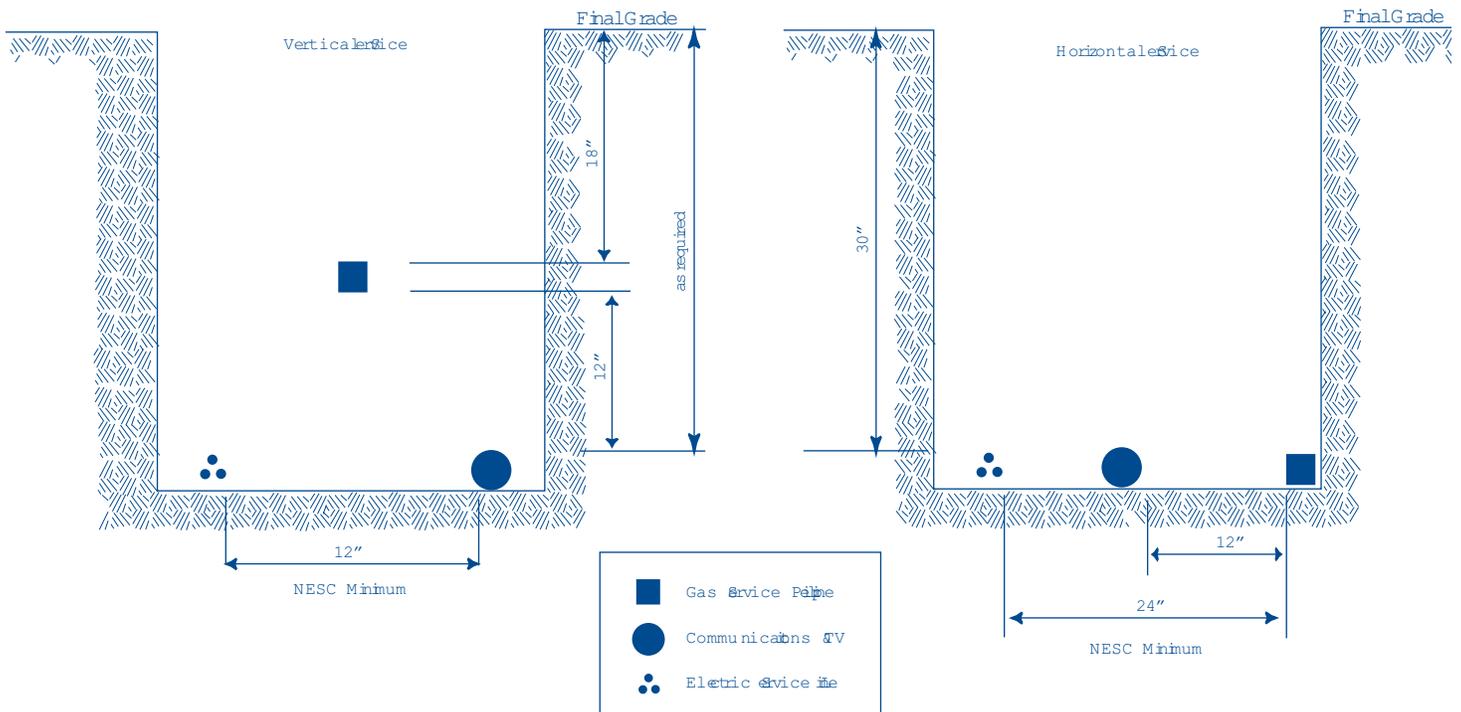
Any Electric to Other Electric or Communications:
12 inches (NorthWestern Energy)

Exception: If NESC Rule 353C & 354 "Random Lay" requirements are met, then no deliberate separation is required.

These burial depths and clearances apply surface-to-surface between pipes, cables, etc., and all associated appurtenances. All depths are from final grade to the top of the pipe or wire.

Local jurisdictions may require greater depths.

Trench Excavation - Deliberate Separation of Utilities (Services Only)



Guidelines for electrical equipment clearances

NorthWestern Energy has specific guidelines and requirements for clearances around our poles and electrical equipment. It is important to consider placement of obstructions around pad-mounted transformers, poles and any other electrical equipment.

In order to provide safe working space for maintenance, repair and replacement of equipment, the following clearances between fences, shrubs, structures and other obstructions and the utility's gas and electrical equipment are necessary and strictly enforced. If any obstructions are in violation of these clearances, they will be removed or corrected at the property owner's expense.

Please keep fences, shrubs, structures and other obstructions

10 feet away from the doors and any combustible walls or surfaces and 4 feet away from the other sides of electrical equipment. NorthWestern Energy requires a minimum of a 4-foot clear zone in front of all gas meters.

Obstructions will cause delay when restoring service and may be damaged or removed during service restoration or maintenance. Please contact your NorthWestern Energy representative for more information.

By following these simple clearance requirements, you can protect your property from being damaged or removed, and it will help to ensure reliable gas and electric service and quick restoration of service.



Guidelines for tree planting

NorthWestern Energy is particularly interested in where and how trees are planted because a large percentage of all power outages are tree related. Outages can occur when branches contact power lines, tree limbs sever power lines, or when uprooted trees pull down lines and poles. Furthermore, tree branches growing into power lines can be extremely dangerous. The amateur tree trimmer, or a child, can be electrocuted when a branch touches a power line and runs to ground across the branch and down the tree trunk. Utilities (and their customers) pay millions of dollars every year to have trees trimmed to avoid the danger of limbs growing into power lines. By following these simple guidelines for tree planting, you can protect your tree from unnecessary trimming and help to ensure reliable electric service.

Rules of Thumb for Tree Planting

Trees whose mature height does not exceed 15 feet fit comfortably under electric lines and are not likely to need trimming for public safety and electric reliability reasons. The following list offers more specific guidelines for tree planting.

- Trees with mature heights of no more than 15 feet can be planted under power lines.
- Trees with mature heights GREATER THAN 15 feet need to be planted a distance equal to their expected mature height away from outside conductor of the power line. For example, a tree with a mature height of 30 feet must be planted at least 30 feet from the outside conductor of the power line.

These guidelines are for planting near distribution power lines. If your home will have an overhead electric service line, you should avoid planting any tree within 10 feet of the expected service route.

Guidelines for Planting Shrubs and Bushes and Equipment Clearances

Although most shrubs and bushes do not grow tall enough to impact overhead power lines, they do require special planning and care when planted around the pad-mount transformer boxes used for underground power lines.

In order to perform maintenance and service, our crews need to have a clear access path to the transformer and adequate workspace in front of the transformer. Choose plants that are easily maintained and suitable for the site. The transformer has to be accessible for service at all times, so avoid planting foliage with thorns, such as caragana, barberry, buckthorn or native hawthorn. Also, ground covers don't stand up to foot traffic, so please don't use them either. Your local nursery should be able to help you select appropriate plants.

Be careful of over planting, and be sure to allow sufficient growing room for the plants you do select. Vines and crawling plants are unwise choices because we need a minimum distance of 1 foot between the outside branch of the plant and the transformer. Once your plants become established, keep

them pruned to allow at least 1 foot between the end branch of the mature plant and the transformer.

Also, a clearance zone of at least 10 feet is required in front of the transformer door (the side with the padlock), and at least four feet on all other sides. That distance is needed so our service people can work safely with the live electrical wires in the box. Please keep this zone free of firewood or other stored materials and avoid planting any shrubs or bushes within this zone. Also please avoid building fences, decks or other structures within the clearance zone.

A minimum clearance of 10 feet is required between the transformer and any combustible wall.

Please Be Safe! Call Before You Dig

Before you dig to plant trees, bushes, shrubs or gardens, please make certain you know the location of underground power, gas and other utility lines. The law requires it, and you really don't want to tangle with utility lines anyway. **Contact 811** for existing underground utility locations at least two working days prior to digging. Utilities can be located free of charge by contacting **811 "Call Before You Dig"**.

Trimming Existing Trees

If your construction site already has trees growing, check to make sure these trees are not in the way of new utility lines being installed for your service. For information on how to trim or remove trees in anticipation of new utility lines, please contact your local arbor culturist. Tree trimming or removal costs for new construction are your responsibility.

We are always concerned for our customers' safety. If you have trees with live power lines running through them, please contact NorthWestern Energy Customer Care Center at (800) 245-6977. We'll check them out to see if they need to be trimmed.

Want More Information?

Because of the impact trees have on power lines, we suggest you work closely with local nurseries and garden shops. These businesses can offer you additional advice for choosing and locating plants in respect to power lines.

If you would like more information on this topic, we publish a guide describing a variety of tree species that grow in your NorthWestern Energy service territory. You may request a copy by calling (800) 245-6977 and ask to visit with our Vegetation Management Specialist.

New service checklist

- Have you read the New Service Guide book?
- Do you have or have you obtained a legal address? (Page 2)
- Have you submitted your application online at NorthWesternEnergy.com? Alternatively, you can mail or email your completed application forms to your nearest Construction Center (inside cover).
- Have you applied for an electrical permit? (Page 4)
 - Do you need a temporary service? (Pages 5 and 6)
- If a price for your service has been quoted, have you submitted payment and the signed Customer Agreement to our office? This must be done before the job can be scheduled. The signed Customer Agreement must be submitted even if there are no charges. Is site preparation and grading complete per our requirements? (Pages 2 and 3) These activities must be completed before utility facilities are installed.
- Have you contacted the Construction Center (inside front cover) to provide information in order to create a customer account? This must be done prior to activation of your service.
- Are all customer-owned buried facilities (sprinkler lines, septic systems, satellite dish cables, etc.) clearly marked? If not, NorthWestern Energy will not be responsible for damages. (Page 3)
- Have you made arrangements for installation of other utilities (phone, cable TV, etc.)?
- On locations with multi-socket (ganged) electrical meter bases, have individual meter sockets been tagged with placards indicating where the electricity will be used? (for example: Apartment or Unit number, address, etc)? (Pages 3 and 5) Has gas piping been similarly tagged at the location where multiple gas meters will be installed? (Page 11)
- If you are a new gas customer, has your gas piping system been pressure tested? Have necessary permits and inspections been completed? (Pages 10 and 11)

Questions? Please call your nearest Construction Center (inside front cover).

Construction Application

Service Requested

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Residential (new): | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Gas |
| Commercial (new): | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Gas |
| Subdivision (new): | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Gas |
| Utility Relocation: | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Gas |
| Service Removal: | <input type="checkbox"/> Electric | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Gas |
| Service Conversion: | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Lighting: | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Irrigation: | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Temporary Electric: | <input type="checkbox"/> | |

(May not be available in all areas)



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Customer Information

Customer/Company Name (Billing Name): _____

Primary Contact Number: _____ Secondary Contact Number: _____

Mailing Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Service Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

(City or County new address assignment may be necessary)

Did you have a previous service with NorthWestern Energy at another address? Yes No

If Yes, Address: _____

Email Address: _____

New Service Information

Building Information: Square Footage: _____ ft²
 Residential: House Mobile Home Garage Multiplex Housing (# of units _____)
 Commercial: Office Retail Restaurant Other (Describe _____)
 Subdivision: Residential (# of Lots _____) Commercial (# of Lots _____)

Residential Load Information:

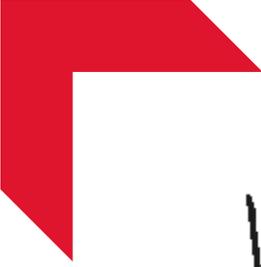
Voltage: 120/240 Other: _____ Panel Size: _____ (Amps)
 Primary Heat Source: Electric Natural Gas Other: _____
 Natural Gas Load: _____ btu/hr (total load of all natural gas appliances)

Commercial/Irrigation Load Information:

Panel Size: _____ (Amps) H.P. _____ (irrigation)
 Voltage: 1Φ 120/240 240/480 (MT ONLY)
 3Φ 120/208 120/240 240/480 (MT ONLY) 277/480
 Natural Gas Load: _____ btu/hr (total load of all natural gas appliances)

Please Note: Customer load sheets and design information is typically required for commercial electric and natural gas service installations. Load sheets may be provided by NorthWestern Energy.

Completed By: _____ Date: _____



We are here
to help.

*Christina J.,
Customer Associate
Part of the team since 2015*



You're busy – let us help!

Take paying your power bill off your “to-do” list by choosing a payment option that fits your lifestyle. Our e-Bill program is a fast, free and paperless way to view and pay your bill online and on the go. To use e-Bill, you will need to set up your My Energy Account and then you'll be ready to pay your bill anytime from any internet connection.

Why sign-up for e-Bill?

- **FREE** Electronic Paperless Billing: Access your bill at your convenience by logging into your online account. You'll receive an email notification when your bill is available to review online – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It's fast, convenient and completely secure.
- **FREE** Online Payments: Once you enroll in the e-Bill program and receive an email notification that your bill is available. You can use your checking or savings account to pay your bill.
- Add EZ Pay: Sign up for EZ Pay at the same time and ensure all your utility bills get paid on time. Through EZ Pay, you can have your payment automatically withdrawn and applied to your NorthWestern Energy account when it's due. You won't have to do a thing! The e-Bill program gives you secure, convenient delivery and saves time.

New Service Guarantees

As your electric and gas utility, NorthWestern Energy is serious about maintaining the highest service standards in the utility industry. To assure our customers of our commitment, we guarantee the following service standards:

- We will provide prompt and courteous customer service. If your requests are not handled in a courteous and prompt manner, please let us know. Your comments will help us serve you better.
- We will respect your property. Respecting your property is a fundamental courtesy. If our employees damage your property, we will respond with a prompt and mutual resolution.

Public safety always must take precedence over normal service. In the event of uncontrollable circumstances, such as severe weather or uncontrollable damages, we will respond promptly to restore service, then resume our commitments without penalty.

Delivering a
bright future

*Bob V.
Director of Central Operations*

**NorthWestern[®]
Energy**

Delivering a Bright Future

**NorthWesternEnergy.com
11 E Park St, Butte, MT 59701-1711**