



T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

In our role of providing electric service to our member-owners, safety is always a top priority. Iowa's policymakers also recognize the necessity of placing a strong emphasis on safety policies and procedures within the utility industry. As technology continues to evolve, they're constantly determining if advancements in technology warrant modifications to existing policies and guidelines.

Because you currently own a distributed generation system, we wanted to make you aware of new laws passed during the 2015 legislative session that directly impact your system. The new laws (House File 548) specifically relate to the disconnect devices for certain distributed generation systems that are interconnected to an electric utility's distribution system. The goal of the policy changes embodied in the new laws is to further enhance the safe disconnection of a distributed generation system (including on-site solar generation) to protect line workers, consumers, electrical contractors, firefighters, and the general public and applies to systems located in the electric service areas of electric cooperatives, municipal utilities and investor-owned utilities. While the new laws contain some noteworthy modifications, the safety aspects build on existing regulations that have been in place for more than 30 years.

The new laws apply to all cogeneration or small power production facilities that are considered a qualifying facility (QF) or an alternate energy production (AEP) facility as defined by Iowa law. Generally, this will include consumer-owned wind turbines and solar arrays. The policy changes will not impact standby/back-up generators unless they are a QF or an AEP, which is not a typical classification for these types of generators.

Through passage of the legislation, which has been signed by Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, the Iowa legislature has directed the Iowa Utilities Board (IUB) to establish formal rules or regulations to implement the new laws. As part of the rules, the IUB also must adopt procedures and additional guidelines, as needed, for consumers and electric utilities. As the IUB provides more details, we will share them with you.

Overall, the new laws primarily cover three areas of changes:

Permanent placard required for interconnections established before July 1, 2015

For installations placed in service prior to July 1, 2015, the member-owner with an interconnected system must provide and attach a permanent placard at the electric meter that clearly identifies the presence and location of a disconnect device for distributed generation facilities on the property. The laws do not require disconnect devices to be moved for systems interconnected prior to July 1, 2015.



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Notification of local fire department

Member-owners who have a system interconnected must notify local paid or volunteer fire departments of the location of the distributed generation facilities and associated disconnection devices upon completion of the installation. The procedure for notifications is one example of where the legislation indicates that the IUB must adopt rules to make this process clear to all parties.

Disconnect device at meter required July 1 going forward

For distributed generation systems interconnected on or after July 1, 2015, a disconnect switch or other device capable of disconnecting and de-energizing a distributed generation system must be visible and located adjacent to an interconnection member-owner's electric meter. Currently, an isolation device is required and can be located anywhere between the distributed generation system and the point of interconnection.

Note: Because you already have a distributed generation system interconnected to T.I.P. Rural Electric Cooperative's system, this policy change does not impact you at this time unless you decide to modify or add to your system in the future.

We understand that updated policies and procedures often lead to questions. At the heart of these changes remains the ultimate priority of the safety of our line workers, member-owners, electrical contractors, firefighters, and the public.

Please contact Scott Long or Cole Calkins at 800-934-7976, if you have questions. We are here to help you comply with the new laws.