



Macon Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Description of the Service Availability Charge

When we discuss service availability, population density is at the heart of the matter. As a cooperative, we purchase and distribute power to members who live across a vast region. Our service territory covers portions of nine counties and includes nearly 3,000 miles of electric lines spread among those counties. We are sparsely populated, but we still have to inspect, purchase and replace poles, conductors and transformers throughout our entire service area. Regardless of whether there is a dozen services per mile or one service per mile, the cooperative must build and maintain the infrastructure to make service available and keep it reliable.

To make service available to all members, no matter how far off the beaten path, cooperatives need to have some form of service availability charge. This charge helps to cover the minimum costs that are required to deliver service to every meter on the system - costs that remain no matter how much electricity is sold. Some of the fixed costs that the service availability charge covers are trimming and clearing right-of-way; trucks and equipment; poles, meters and wires; computer systems and software.

Think of the service availability charge like this: if you own a car, you have to pay insurance, license and taxes whether you drive every day or once a year. Fixed charges are like those expenses that come with your car and your cooperative budgets for these costs the same as you. While you may not use much electricity, we must keep the system functional so that you have the ability to use electricity whenever you need it. It costs just as much to ensure the reliability and availability of power for a cabin or grain bin as it does for a home.

Another way to think of service availability is like insurance. If a storm causes damages the cooperative does not bill members for system repairs. The service availability charge ensures that you have service no matter how much or how little energy you purchase. This helps guarantee each member of our cooperative is paying their fair share, and not being subsidized by others.

If you have questions regarding the service availability charge, please contact our office at (660) 385-3157.