

# REPORTED PROBLEMS *from* STOPSMARTMETERSBC.CA

Problems with Smart Meters in British Columbia

## FIRES

**FIRE** - Smart Meter started smoking and house left without power for day – Nanaimo – **FULL STORY**

## HEALTH EFFECTS

**Health** - Headache and dizziness when near Collection Antenna – Richmond - **FULL STORY**

**Health** problems caused home owner to demand removal – Cache Creek - **FULL STORY**

**Health** – Chilliwack – January 2012

I live in a three level townhouse. There are now 2 – Smart Meters on the side of my townhouse. One is mine and other is my neighbour's. When the Smart Meter installers came in Nov. 2011, I talked to the man changing meters on my block. When told him I didn't want a Smart Meter because of my chronic illness and environmental sensitivities, he laughed in my face and installed it anyway.

Since then, I have suffered severe worsening of my symptoms. My body has been in so much pain and I feel an overwhelming heaviness. I have a very bad headache all of the time: it feels like a vein in my head is going break open and head is going around in circles. The pain in my head is so strong and it hurts so much to lift my head that I have a difficult time getting out of bed and need help from my husband.

I know it sounds like exaggeration, but the simplest and truest way to describe it is to say I feel like I'm going to die.

**Health** – Williams Lake BC – January 2012

I had my smart meter installed about a month ago. In fact the meter is just outside my bedroom, along with my neighbours meter. After a few weeks, I started noticing I was getting headaches a lot and was having difficulty sleeping. After 2-4 hours of lying in my bed, I would wake up with aching pains in my neck, back, shoulders, arms and chest. My breathing was also worse. I had to stop sleeping in my bedroom and move to the other end of my home, further away from the meters. It's better but still not great. I've never known myself to be emf sensitive but I don't use wifi or cellphones, or perhaps I would have noticed sooner. I wrote to BC Hydro a few weeks ago, explaining that there meters were making me sick and asking for my analog meter to be returned. They have simply ignored me, not responding at all. I'm certain under the Canadian Criminal code that I have the right to protect myself from assault/grievous bodily harm, don't I? To use reasonable force in defending myself? Anyways, I wrote to you to let you know about the impact the meters are having on my health.

**Health** – Sidney – January 2012

Despite correspondence with BC Hydro requesting a Smart Meter not be installed for health reasons, and posted no trespassing/installation signs, a meter was installed by Corix December 9th based on implied 'permission' from a house sitter who clearly identified herself as such. I was out of town visiting my mother who is in palliative care.

Since installation, I have experienced insomnia, arrhythmias, fatigue and other symptoms. I am very concerned for the long-term health of my nine year old daughter.

Calls and letters to Corix and BC Hydro have brought no response to requests for more information as to risk and for meter removal. I have written the Premier's Office and will also write to my MLA and Member of Parliament. I am considering organizing a local community response and wonder what our legal rights are for individual or class action. Most importantly, I need the meter removed quickly because of the ill health effects I am experiencing. Do you know what my legal options are? What if I have an electrician replace with another meter? Do you have any information on actions citizens are taking when their health requires a quick resolution and they receive no response from BC Hydro? I would appreciate your advice on next steps as I cannot continue with these health effects for long and am concerned my ability to support my family will be compromised.

**Health** – Fort St John – Jan 7 2012

I'm not sure when the meters were installed in Fort St. James, but I had asked my daughter (who lives in FST) at the end of Nov. if she had one and she said yes and it was installed about a month or so ago. So around mid Sept. or Oct. I live on 4 acres out side of Prince George and still have an old meter. My other daughter and her family from Alberta went to Fort. St. James for Xmas (Dec. 24 to the 28th.) Her 5 month old son was born with Larynomalacia, who is on prescription medication to stop him from vomiting which he has been on since birth. He has never vomited. The morning of Dec. 28th. he projectile vomited which scared my daughter and husband. They arrived here in PG. around noon the same day. The baby vomited one more time. They stayed here until Jan. 2nd. The

baby did not vomit again after the 28th. Info on Larynomalacia is on you tube and there is Coping with Larynomalacia on facebook. I can't explain or understand the condition, but it has something to do with the flap that closes at the larex when we eat and breath. I gave my daughter info regarding smart meters and the side effects. She was relieved knowing her son was not sick do to the flu, but really upset that she my not be able to visit her father, sisters, brothers, and large family in FSJ until her son is better/older.

### ***Health Problems reported in California***

## **DAMAGED APPLIANCES & ELECTRONICS**

**Damage – Computer Blows** in Office when meters installed – Maple Ridge – Jan 11, 20, 2011

**Damage – Computer Blows** in Home when meter installed – Chilliwack – Dec 20, 2011 - **FULL STORY**

**Damage – Freezer, Stove, Microwave and Hot Water tank damaged** when meter installed – Maple Ridge - Jan 18, 2012 - **FULL STORY**

**Damage - Hot Water Tank Blew** – December 2011

I went into a house yesterday, the smart meter had just been installed. The seller has to get a plumber and an electrician because the breaker blew on the hot water tank and the hot water tank blew as well. I have heard of peoples appliances such as TV's being affected etc. Too much!

**Damage - Fried Computer** – Vancouver – December 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

On December 6, 2011 30 Smart Meters were installed down the hall from me in my apartment building. The loss of power fried our hard drive on our computer and we lost 6 months worth of data and photos. (We were not notified in advance that they were being installed or that there would be a short power outage or surge.) I will not be staying in this building to monitor the health effects. We have been told they won't be active until 2013 and we will be moving out before then because of the risk (I'm pregnant).

**Damage - Fried Computer** – Chilliwack BC – December 20, 2011

\*Subject:\* [Damages - Computer - Chilliwack, BC] Smart meter conversion concerns by Tyler Olsen – The Chilliwack Times – December 20, 2011 Smart meter conversion concerns by Tyler Olsen – The Chilliwack Times - December 20, 2011: <http://www.chilliwacktimes.com/technology/Smart+meter+conversion+concerns/5886040/story.htm>

Smart meter conversion concerns Resident blames BC Hydro for fried computer by Tyler Olsen December 20, 2011 A Chilliwack man whose computer was fried by a power surge while having a BC Hydro smart meter installed says hydro customers should be warned to unplug any electronics or turn their breakers off on the day of their meter changeover. Sven Tornlov said he thinks the smart meters are a good idea that will save the province money. But he says he's now faced with a steep bill to replace his computer after its motherboard died. Tornlov was home last Thursday when a Corix Utilities worker appeared and said she was turning the power off in two minutes. Tornlov said pamphlets mailed to his house warn users to turn off all electronics. But he says there is no mention that they still may be at risk in case of a power surge. "In their literature and the way they talk is it just sounds like it's just plug and play," said Tornlov. BC Hydro's website says that when it comes time for a smart meter to be installed, "The installer will knock on your door and if you are home they will notify you of the exchange and give you time to shutdown and unplug any equipment, such as your computer." But Tornlov said he was never told to unplug his computer. "They don't say anything verbally," he said. And the letter mailed to residents' houses gives no such advice. Tornlov said that immediately after the meter was installed, the lights in his house began flickering and his computer didn't reboot. When he took the computer to a repair shop, he said a worker told him "during this time, when they're doing all this stuff, it will be increased business for me." Tornlov said he called BC Hydro to see if they would compensate him, but said he was told that the public utility doesn't guarantee continual power, that it would not have caused a power surge, and that even if it did, he should have called a line for those with "special electronics." But Tornlov said there is nothing about his computer that would make him consider it "special" in 2011. "You think the common courtesy would be at the door to remind you at that point in time," he said. "I'm an accountant, I'm not an electrician, so why am I the guy who has to come up with the idea: 'Wow, if I had flipped my breaker, there would have been no chance of a problem.'" But Cindy Verschoor, BC Hydro's manager of communications for smart meters, said the installation of a smart meter should not cause a power surge. "It's like unplugging a plug," she said. "It doesn't result in a power surge or anything like that on a regular residential home." She speculated that faulty or old wiring could be to blame for any problems surrounding the installation of the smart meters. "Like any piece of equipment, the wiring in your home can erode over time and we have no way of knowing the condition of your wiring when we exchange your meter, and that's why we just let customers know they might want to turn things off just in case. But the reality is that it's not because we're exchanging the meter. It's just an extra precaution." Verschoor also said that residents are told to unplug their computers to ensure that anything they are working on is not lost when the power goes out. She said that people do not, actually, have to unplug their computers, but just turn them off. [HYPERLINK "https://webmail.stopsmartmetersbc.ca/src/compose.php?send\\_to=tolsen%40chilliwacktimes.com"](https://webmail.stopsmartmetersbc.ca/src/compose.php?send_to=tolsen%40chilliwacktimes.com) tolsen@chilliwacktimes.com

**Damage - TV Blew** – December 2011

I sent a registered letter to BC Hydro which was received. The letter clearly stated that I did not want a Smart Meter installed at my residence. They installed it anyway. The same day that the meter was installed my excellent working TV blew. I had to buy a new one.

**Damage - Computer Blew** – Pitt Meadows – December 2011

Neighbour I spoke with said her sister who lives in a Pitt Meadows apartment building left their computer on while they were not at home the other day and came back after their building was installed and the computer was fried

**Damage - Stove and Hot Tub Fried** – Sooke – December 2011

I / We are amongst the thousands of BC citizens who have recently had a smart meter installed. After much telephone bullying on the part of a Corix employee. My husband was told that our that our power would be cut off if we did not agree to have the meter exchanged. Our meter was changed on November 14th.

Since that time we have replaced our stove. The oven stopped working. About three weeks ago our hot tub did not seem to be working. We do not use it very often so I am not sure when the problems with the hot tub started. We had the hot tub repairman come out last week and he has seen several topside control panels and circuit boards with visible signs of burnout. The circuit board has three over heating marks on it. That is what happened to the stove as well. Today I called Corix – the company has been on holiday over Christmas. The initial answer that I got was the install was done properly and BC Hydro has no responsibility for any problems we are experiencing. I asked to speak to a manager who started off saying the same thing. I explained that the two appliances both with circuit boards and they were on while the install was being done. We did not have other things on in the house as it is a vacation home and no one was there, we unplug things to save money. By the end of the conversation the Manager said that she would send an electrician out to verify that the install was done correctly. I asked if the electrician was an independent contractor – he is a Corix supervisor. He will be coming tomorrow morning to look at the install.

Update: I was very vocal with the Corix woman who would not give her name. We even had a Corix employee come to the property and photograph the notice I taped to the meters asking that they not be changed. One of my neighbours asked not to have their meter changed and the installer did not do it. She has small Children and that is what she told the installer. It makes me wonder where the logic is. I would like an independent electrician to have a look at the meter install as well. A Corix employee is not independent. We now have the bill for the hot tub repair. The two items together are about \$1500. Pretty harsh! We cannot afford pay any more money as a result of this.

**Damage - Computer and Freezer Fried** – Burnaby BC – December 2011

Burnaby man believes freezer, computer damaged by smart meter install by Wanda Chow December 20, 2011 Ron Halifax and his wife were happy to be home after a month away on a cruise last summer. That was until the Burnaby couple discovered a computer was “completely fried” and a deep freeze had defrosted and all the food inside spoiled. When they found a notice in their mailbox letting them know a smart meter had been installed at their house a week earlier, Halifax wondered if there was a connection. He called BC Hydro < HYPERLINK “<http://www.burnabynewsleader.com/news/135892238.html>” the next day to complain but “they said it could never happen,” he said, referring to the possibility the installation damaged the freezer and computer. But when he read a recent NewsLeader story about a similar case in which another Burnaby couple lost a fridge and microwave around the same time their smart meter was installed, he contacted the paper as well. “I don’t think they should’ve changed it without our being home or being notified,” said Halifax, 81. The retired police officer said it cost him \$1,300 to replace the equipment, not to mention all the spoiled food they had to throw out. The two Burnaby cases join one reported in the Richmond Review last August when a man in that city said his fridge was working fine until the arrival of the smart meter installer. When electricity was restored after the installation, the fridge started making noises and stopped working. But BC Hydro denies such problems are related to the smart meter installations. As of last month, about 300,000 smart meters had been installed province wide and “the vast majority of those have been problem free,” said BC Hydro spokesperson Cindy Verschoor in an earlier interview. Prior to the smart meter program, about 40,000 regular electrical meters had been exchanged annually. During the installation, a brief 60-second power outage occurs and when power is restored, it’s no different than when it occurs after any other type of power outage, she said. “In a very small number of cases we do find that the customer actually does need to do some repairs to their wiring, that they may have an issue they didn’t know about otherwise,” she said. Customers are sent a letter about a month in advance of an installation, which explains the process. It’s suggested that items such as computers be turned off to prevent any work from being lost during the power outage. Halifax said they never got a letter from Hydro notifying them the smart meter would be installed in coming weeks, only a notice after the fact. Eric Sipila, senior electrical inspector for the City of Burnaby, said it would be a “very remote chance” that the smart meter installation could damage appliances and equipment. So far the city has dealt with about a half dozen cases in which the meter sockets have been damaged during the installation, he noted. They learn about it when electrical contractors take out a permit for the repair work, he said, noting such cases simply mean a delay of a few hours before the new smart meter can be installed and power restored to a home. Otherwise, the small numbers of cases of damaged appliances being reported in the media seem to suggest “it’s a very good chance it’s more coincidence than anything else,” Sipila said. [https://webmail.stopsmartmetersbc.ca/src/compose.php?send\\_to=wchow%40burnabynewsleader.com](https://webmail.stopsmartmetersbc.ca/src/compose.php?send_to=wchow%40burnabynewsleader.com) wchow@burnabynewsleader.com

**Damage - Television Blows** in Home when meter installed – Vancouver Island – Dec 2011

**Damage - Kitchen Stove Blows** in Home when meter installed – Tsawwassen - Dec 16 2011 – FULL STORY

## **Damage – Fridge Blows in Home when meter installed – Richmond Dec 2011 – FULL STORY**

### **Damage to Cedar Siding – Powell River, BC- November 2011**

I would just like to report damage to my house cedar siding from the installation of a smart meter. The installer had to tear off exterior shingles to facilitate the replacement of the meter, leaving the house exposed to the elements down to the tar paper. I reported and photographed the damage and it was inspected by a Corix rep. A few days later, I got a phone call from Corix Utilities saying they were sorry and they offered to send me an apology gesture of a Canadian Tire gift card for \$25, after I signed a letter they were sending out to me. A couple of days later I got the letter. It is basically a release or discharge to Corix of any liability to the damages resulting from the installation. It seems to me they are getting off too easy with the \$25 bribe, so I am not signing or sending the letter back, until I at least get a cost estimate on the repairs, and some legal advice.

Update: I might add that I did not respond to the letter and a few weeks later the original Corix rep I talked to made a follow-up call to me about the letter. I told him I would not sign the letter of release sent to me for a \$25 bribe and preferred to maintain my right to take legal action against them if further moisture damage resulted from the damaged siding. That was the last correspondence.

## **DRAMATIC BILL INCREASE**

Home in Fraser Canyon

Home on Vancouver Island

Home in Vancouver

## **INTIMIDATION, THREATS, BULLYING**

**Installer breaks old meter** to avoid removal of New meter (at home owners request) – Maple Ridge – December 2011

**Installer proceeds to Install** a meter even though home owner clearly stated they did not want one installed. - Chilliwack

**Intimidation and Threats** – Victoria – December 2011

I received a call from BC Hydro this am, asking why we didn't want the meter installed! They said there was a lot of 'misinformation' out there concerning the meters. They claimed that the 'new' ones are better than the old ones. They claimed that the meters are only active once a day when the meter is read, the rest of the time the meter is inactive and no EMF's are transmitted. EMF's emitted are no more than a cell phone call! They claimed that there is a "protective shield" behind the meter.(which doesn't protect you from your neighbors meter though) They also threatened us by saying that if we didn't have it installed by end of Jan, then we would have to pay for the installation ourselves and they would cut off the hydro. Just wondered what your comments were concerning these statements?. We did see that in California they had removed all the smart meters and gone back to the old ones

**Intimidation, Threats and Bulling** – Victoria – December 2011

Today, Wed Jan 4th, 2012, at 12:30 p.m. Corix removed a "No Smart Meter" (signed, dated and addressed) Notice from my neighbour's house in the Cadboro Bay area and installed a sick meter. The van drove out of her driveway as she drove in.

\*WARNING\* A BC Hydro rep to whom my neighbour spoke to on the phone said four things worth mentioning:

1. My neighbour should have phoned BC Hydro to say she did not want a smart meter (of course a registered letter as well is best)
2. She was told "The Notice was probably taken down by someone other than Corix; Corix wouldn't do such a thing" she was also asked how would Corix know if the Notice was fraudulent?!!!!
3. The BC rep insisted Smart Meters are mandatory due to the Clean Energy Act
4. The analogue meter cannot be returned.

**Intimidation** – BC – January 2012

We live in a condo complex where all the meters are concentrated in one room with owners living on all sides. We contacted BC Hydro, and Corix to advise that we do not want the smart meters (decided in a meeting of owners) in our building due to health concerns. BC Hydro called back after they received our individual letters, (signed with individual signatures, unit numbers and Hydro account numbers) and said they wanted to talk to each owner "individually" about our concerns. Of course I questioned that "why can't we talk to a Hydro rep in a group situation"? My guess is that a group situation would bring too many questions to the forefront and they do not want to face the backlash. We have been advised that they will be installing here in the next 2 weeks.

**Intimidation, Threats and Bulling** – Montney BC – December 2011

On Thursday Dec.1 at approx. 4:00 pm a man in a white truck came to our door and said he was here to install a Smart Meter. He had no nametag showing and never offered to tell my husband and I his name. My husband told him that we were refusing the Smart Meter and asked him if he had seen the NO SMART METER HERE sign that was on the pole below our analog meter. The man said yes he did see it but it meant nothing and we had to take the smart meter. Again my husband said that we didn't want one and asked the man to leave our property. The man then left and went directly to the pole where the analog meter is. My husband had to go outside and stand between the pole and the man and his truck and once again tell him that we didn't want a Smart Meter. I told the man that I had health issues, which I do, and he then told us that it doesn't do any more harm to a person than a cordless phone. This man was very rude and he threatened us that he was going to inform BC Hydro to charge us for him coming out here because we refused the Smart Meter and that he was also going to tell BC Hydro to come out and cut our power off. He was very rude, very ignorant and threatening, trying to intimidate us. He told again that the NO SMART METER SIGN HERE signs meant nothing and that Stopsmartmetersbc.ca absolutely has no say in anything and that it was already a legal thing that everyone has to get a Smart Meter and that when we signed up with BC Hydro we agreed to let BC Hydro do what ever was needed to do in the future. Eventually the man left but he was very mad and told us that he would be back. As I said we don't know the mans name but I did get a picture of the truck he was in and the number that is on the front of the hood on the passengers side. I took the picture because I thought that way we could at least find out who was driving that truck with that number on it that day in our neighborhood.

### **Intimidation, Threats and Bullying – Salt Spring BC – December 2011**

#### **Four Known Attempts to Remove Analog Meters and Install Wireless Smart Meters**

##### **#1- Salt Spring Residents Refuse Smart Meter**

On Dec.13 at 1:30 PM, two unmarked vehicles arrived in our driveway in the Fort Street area. The first vehicle was a black, open box truck. The male trucker driver wore a yellow workman's vest. No company logo. We do not know who he was (at the time, we thought he was an Electrician or the person who would be exchanging the meters). The second vehicle was a grey SUV/large car with a man and woman. We thought we heard them introduce themselves as from Measurement Canada. We phoned our neighbours who came to our house to stand with us to refuse the removal of our analog meter and installation of a smart meter. We invited the two from Measurement Canada into our home to discuss the situation. When our neighbour questioned who they were, they said they were from BC Hydro. No certificate, no badges, business cards, or ID. We are not positive who they are employed by. They said they were here to explain that it is the Canadian Government that is requiring analog meters that are not reading accurately to be replaced by smart meters. We said they could have our analog meter only if they replaced it with another analog meter. They said there are no analog meters left to replace ours. We had a polite discussion of why we are refusing installation of a smart meter. We have protection around our analog meter with signs posted surrounding it. We have sent our letters to BC Hydro and Corix. The Electrician (?) and 2 BC Hydro (?) people left without installing a smart meter. This was a very traumatic experience for me and my husband. We should have taken photos. And we really needed our neighbours and even more supporters to help verify what actually happened.

**#2 – Salt Spring Resident Refuses Smart Meter Despite Intimidation Tactics** A lady owning a home on Salt Spring Island Reported to Gulf Islanders for Safe Technology that she had received a letter a few weeks earlier from BC Hydro stating that she had been selected to receive a smart meter. After being warned that BC Hydro is on the island and are using the false pretense of doing a calibration exercise for Measurement Canada, she asked for advice from people working to oppose smart metering. She was told that she would have a smart meter installed unless she can protect her analog meter. She had previously e-mailed BC Hydro and had phone conversations with BC Hydro officials to let them know she would not accept a wireless smart meter. She had posted Do Not Install signage by her analog meter. On Dec.13, after being warned again that BC Hydro was in her area, she saw the BC Hydro team in unmarked vehicles on her driveway. She managed to convey to them her refusal of a smart meter. She was told they would not pursue this until they return to Salt Spring Island in 2012 to replace all the analog meters as planned.

**#3 – Salt Spring Residents Refuse Smart Meter Despite Threat of RCMP Involvement** Gulf Islanders for Safe Technology also heard from a third party. The Salt Springers were approached in the afternoon by 3 BC Hydro employees. The owner of the property was told that BC Hydro was there just "to do some maintenance". When asked what maintenance, the Salt Springers were told it would involve getting a smart meter. The property owners told BC Hydro that there would be no smart meter on their property. After attempting to persuade them, the BC Hydro crew left. Shortly after this, these residents received a phone call from a lady named "Sam" from BC Hydro. She talked to one of the owners for ~40 minutes about this maintenance being called for by the Federal Government. This BC Hydro employee then indicated that the RCMP might be contacted to convince the owners to accept a smart meter. Sam was intimidating and threatening. Again, the property owner let it be known that there would never be a smart meter installed on this property.

**#4 – Gulf Islanders for Safe Technology** received a phone call this afternoon from a Concerned Salt Springer who attended the Smart Meter Strategy Meeting last week. While walking he came across a parked small white pickup truck with a canopy and black wheels. He overheard an interchange between a resident homeowner and the truck operator whereby a smart meter was being refused by the resident. There were no threats overheard from this truck operator. The Concerned Salt Springer entered into a conversation with this would-be smart meter installer and learned that there are 3 teams right now on Salt Spring Island – for the North, Central and South areas – who are actively installing smart meters. They each have lists of places which are to get smart meters. The Concerned Salt Springer concludes that these are sub-contractors for BC Hydro. The installer said they will be on Salt Spring for another day or so only. They will then proceed to another Gulf Island to continue this smart meter installation work.

## PROPERTY DAMAGE

### **Damage to Cedar Siding – Powell River – November 2011**

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### **Hot Water Tank Blew – December 2011**

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