

Question and Answers

Q. How does the system work?

- A.** Load Management Control Systems consist of three basic parts:
1. The Computer Control Center
 2. The transmitter
 3. The Control Switch at the customer's appliance.

The computer constantly monitors Grand Rapids total load requirements. When it senses a load increase over a pre-set level, the computer initiates a load control sequence which causes the transmitter to send a radio signal to the customer's control switch. The control switch, located at the customer's residence, disconnects and reconnects power to your electric water heater or building heating/cooling system as load requirements dictate.

Q. How can I reduce the peak load?

- A.** You can help reduce peak loads by allowing Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission to turn off and on (cycle) your electric water heater with remote controlled switching equipment during peak loads.

What's in it for me?

Q. Will my monthly power bill be reduced?

- A.** Yes. Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission will offer direct rate incentives to those who participate in the program. The direct rate incentive for Electric Water Heater Control will be five dollars (\$5.00) per month. Your savings will start with the first full billing period following installation of the control switch and start-up of the Load Management System.

Q. Will it cost me anything for basic electric water heater control?

- A.** No. For the Electric Water Heater Control, the Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission will pay the cost of purchasing and installing the complete load management system for all existing customers. Future electric customers may be required to use load management and pay the cost of installing the control switch.

Q. Why cycle electric water heaters?

- A.** This high electric use appliance contributes significantly to Grand Rapids peak load. This appliance can be interrupted with little or no inconvenience to our customers.

Q. Will I be without hot water when my electric water heater is being cycled?

- A.** No. The heat storage capacity of water heaters make control by Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission easy to accomplish with little, if any, inconvenience to the customer. During control periods, electric water heaters are turned off for a specific period of time. As soon as the peak demand for electricity has passed, the water heater is automatically turned on. Studies show that control periods up to eight hours can be used on most hot water heaters without inconveniencing the customer. The control periods, which will not be every day, are expected not to exceed 3 hours. Unless you use a tremendous amount of hot water during the period of control, you will not know that the water heater has been off.

Q. What size water heater do I need to participate in the program?

A. Present regulations for participating in the water heater control program require that you have a forty (40) gallon minimum capacity water heater which is electrically rated two hundred forty volts (240V). If you are unsure if your water heater qualifies, please contact us and we will have our service representative contact you to make this determination.

Q. Can the control switch be removed if I am dissatisfied?

A. Yes. Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission believes that inconveniences to customers will be minimal. The cost saving should outweigh any minor inconveniences. However, upon request, Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission will remove the control switch if you are dissatisfied.

Q. How do I sign up for the program?

A. Additional information about the Load Management Program may be obtained by contacting the Grand Rapids Public Utilities Commission at 218-326-7024. Customers wanting to participate in the program can schedule an appointment for a Public Utilities Service Technician to install the control switch. There is no cost to the homeowner.