

# Specific Instructions on How to Protect Your Meter

## *Shackle locks, cages, and bars*

Locking your meter is the immediate best method to prevent installation. *However*, this will only slow the utility company down. Be sure to also read everything in our document "[Keep DTE from Removing Your Meter.](#)"

You can lock your meter *as soon as* you procure a lock, in the next day or two. Then, as soon as possible, take the next step to prevent installation by installing a cage, guard, or bar. The [Smart Meter Education Network](#) will keep you updated on DTE's and Consumers Energy's latest tactics. Be sure to subscribe to our [newsletter](#) to receive these updates.

Locking your meter is legal. It is no different than if the meter were located inside your home.

Click here for instructions on [how to lock your gas meter](#).

We suggest you don't write to DTE until they contact you with their opt-out or installation [letter](#). No need to alert them. But please [write us](#) and let us know what you've done. And send us a picture! We want to make a bulletin board of caged and locked meters on our website.

### *Contents*

#### **I. Shackle Locks: The Immediate Best Method to Prevent Installation**

#### **II. Hidden Shackle Locks**

#### **III. Meter Cages: The Most Secure Method**

#### **IV. Tatar Meter Guard**

#### **V. Secure Method: Bar Across the Meter Box**

### **I. Shackle Locks: The Immediate Best Method to Prevent Installation**

- Shackle locks can be purchased at your local hardware store, home improvement store, or online. They look like the picture on the right and cost as little as \$12. While they cannot be cut with bolt-cutters, DTE simply cuts the loop you put the lock through on your meter. The shackle lock is a *short-term* solution. See our main website page.
- You may want to measure the diameter of the hole in the loop to make sure the shackle lock hasp will fit through it. Usually a 3/8" hasp will work, but occasionally that is too large.
- Slip the lock through the loop at the base of your meter.
- Your electric meter is housed in a box on the outside of your house. There will be a loop at the bottom. The arrows in the pictures point to the loop. This loop should go through a little slit.



You will put the lock through the loop. Make sure that the loop is through the slit or the box can be opened.



An electric box.



The loop on the electric box.

- If you want to make the lock more secure, while you are at the hardware store, you can buy some nuts that you can slip on to the lock's hasp. This will provide absolutely no free space around the hasp. You'll have to buy a variety of nut sizes, and you can also use other heavy pieces of metal, or wind wire around the loop. See picture 3.
- The shackle lock may not be a long-term solution. As noted [here](#), DTE installers are sometimes cutting the loop on the meter box, bypassing the lock altogether. While this is illegal (they are destroying your property), once the smart meter is on your home, it's on until you remove and replace it with an analog or the State of Michigan changes its policies regarding forced smart meter installation. This is why it is advisable to take the next step and install a cage or bar.



Pic. 2. Regular lock (be sure you get a SHACKLE lock) with nuts on front and back of lock loop. The plastic thing to the left of the lock is a tag the utility company puts thru the loop to make sure you do not open the box. Most meters never need fixing, so the tag has probably been there since at least the 1970s, if your house is that old. Hmm. Must mean analog meters work really well!



Pic 3. Box with shielded shackle lock thru loop and additional locks and hardware attached thru the lock's loop. You can't really see the shackle lock here (it's on the right), just the nuts, locks, etc threaded through the loop. Note that there is still easy access to the loop for the meter, which an installer can cut with a hacksaw. They are destroying your property if they do so (the meter housing belongs to you), but they will sometimes do it, and it is possible that DTE will make this a policy. This is why you should take the next step and use a cage, bar, or angle bracket.

## II. Hidden Shackle Locks

Hidden, or "hockey puck," shackle locks might work on your meter. This type of shackle lock is impossible to cut, because the hasp is actually inside of the body of the lock. You must have the space to accommodate the "hidden" style of shackle locks. Also, the lock may hang down enough that the loop can still be cut.



## III. Meter Cages: The Most Secure Method

**This is the best method to keep a smart meter from being installed on your home.** What you want in a cage is something that cannot be accessed from the outside except by you. This means that hinges are inside the cage, the cage is made of hardened steel or is otherwise uncuttable. You can have someone construct a cage for you, or you can buy one online. The cage shown at right can be purchased online. It is used to prevent thieves from stealing copper wire or your electricity. You have every right to have this box on your home for those very reasons. It has a keyed lock, so that if the meter ever needs to be repaired, you can access it. It has wire mesh so the meter can be easily read. You want to make sure that the cage is affixed so that it cannot be removed by anyone other than you. Contact one of the companies listed below for how this is done.



For online retailers, see

- [www.acstolen.com/](http://www.acstolen.com/) (Our top recommendation. Owner is very helpful.)
- [www.cisco-eagle.com/catalog/c-4314-utility-box-security-cage.aspx](http://www.cisco-eagle.com/catalog/c-4314-utility-box-security-cage.aspx)
- [www.globalindustrial.com/p/hvac/air-conditioning/ac-installation-accessories/utility-meter-security-cages-20-inl-x-26-inw-x-34-inh](http://www.globalindustrial.com/p/hvac/air-conditioning/ac-installation-accessories/utility-meter-security-cages-20-inl-x-26-inw-x-34-inh)
- [www.protectivecages.com/products.html](http://www.protectivecages.com/products.html)



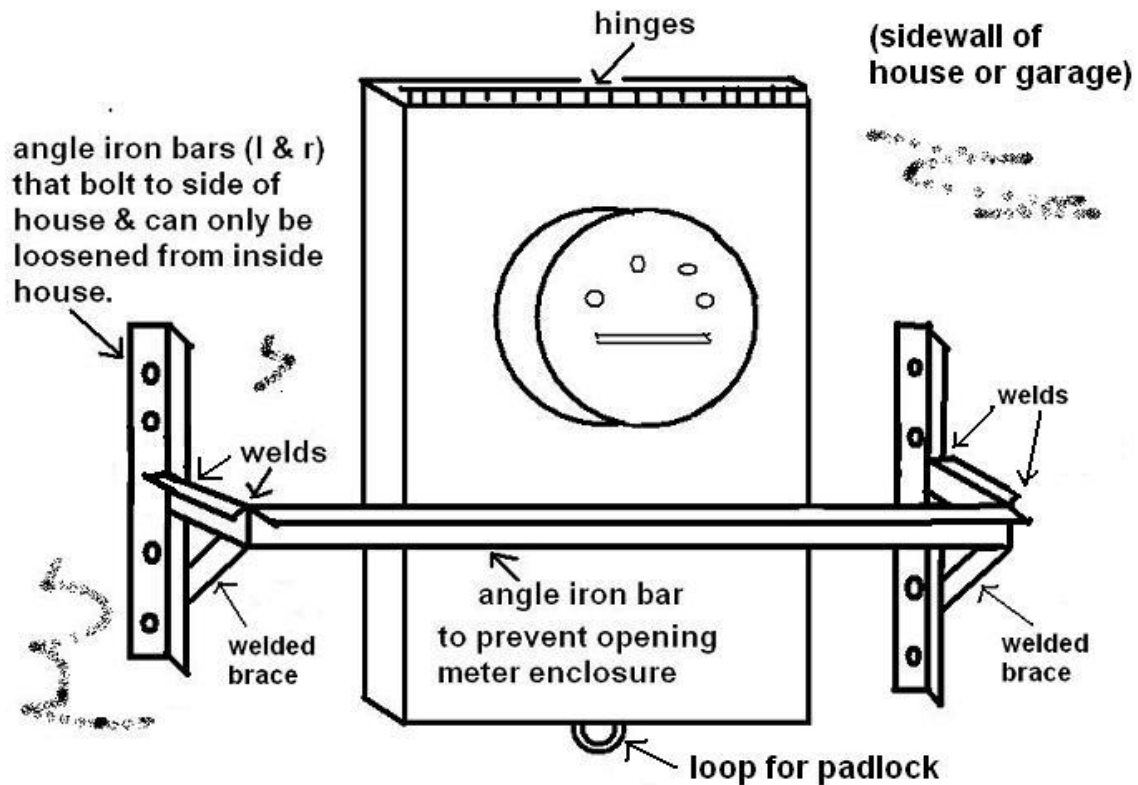
#### **IV. Tatar Meter Guard**

See our [Keep the Meter Off Your Home](#) page for more information on the Tatar Meter Guard. [Contact us](#) for a phone number.

#### **V. Secure Method: Bar Across the Meter Box**

- You can also construct a bar to prevent meter removal. You can do this yourself or hire someone to construct it. See the picture diagram on the next page.
- You want to make sure all components are of hardened steel so that they cannot be cut or sawed through.
- It would be best to find someone who can make a bar that will open (is hinged), but the trick is that the hinges must not be able to be destroyed.

## Design for a welded meter guard



On most meter enclosures an installer would have to open the front cover, usually hinged from top, in order to remove one meter and install another. Putting a padlock through the loop is no longer enough as installers are increasingly aggressive. You need a welder to construct this frame for you and it should be heat treated to harden it (against being sawed through), and secured by bolts through the wall that can only be undone from inside house or garage.