



INTERRUPTIBLE FARM IRRIGATION

STEARNS ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION



The Interruptible Farm Irrigation program is designed to help reduce the electric load during times of peak energy demand. Participating members allow their irrigation system to be shut down for a four-hour control period in the afternoon/early evening on days that there is a large demand for energy. This normally will be from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. The system may be controlled only one time in a 24-hour period and will be re-energized by 9 p.m. any time there is a control.

NEW SYSTEMS

Any member adding an irrigation system with a 10 horsepower pump or larger is required to participate in our Interruptible Farm Irrigation program for a minimum of one season.

REQUIREMENT

A demand response unit (DRU) must be attached to the irrigator, which is provided and installed by Stearns Electric Association at no charge.

BENEFIT

Participating members receive a discounted demand charge for the controlled irrigation system.

More than ever, electricity powers our life.
It's your power. Our mission is to help you use it wisely.

STEARNS ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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STEARNSELECTRIC.ORG



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- 1. What months are irrigation kilowatt hours (kWh) billed?**
Irrigators are billed for usage in June, July, August and September. Bills sent the following months in July, August, September and October.
- 2. Why are irrigation locations only billed four times per year?**
Historical usage data displays that the months from June – September are the highest usage months for irrigation locations. Even though Stearns Electric only processes irrigation bills four times a year, irrigation location members can use the irrigator any time that is convenient for them as the location does have power all 12 months of the year.
- 3. What is the Fixed Charge for an irrigation system enrolled on the Interruptible Farm Irrigation Program?**
The annual Fixed Charge is \$600.00 per year, which is billed over four pay periods at \$150.00 per month. Bills are sent the months of July, August, September and October.
- 4. Is the Fixed Charge billed even if the irrigation system is not used?**
Yes, a Fixed Charge is the cost to have service at that location no matter the amount of energy usage, so it is billed despite how much or how little energy is used.
- 5. What is the energy charge per kWh?**
There is a charge \$.07531 per kWh for the use of the irrigator.
- 6. What is the difference between controlled and uncontrolled demand charges?**
When a member participates in the Interruptible Farm Irrigation program, they agree to allow Stearns Electric Association to shut down their irrigation system when there is a large demand for energy. For participating in the program, the location qualifies for the lower controlled demand charge per kW.
- 7. What is the controlled demand charge per kW?**
The controlled demand charge is \$5.00 per kW.
- 8. What is the uncontrolled demand charge per kW?**
The uncontrolled demand charge is \$18.00 per kW.
- 9. Is the controlled and uncontrolled demand a ratcheted demand?**
Yes, the demand billed on an irrigation account is a ratcheted demand.
- 10. What is a ratcheted demand?**
A ratcheted demand means the location is billed the highest demand from the history of the location, not based on the most recent energy usage. Because irrigation energy load fluctuates considerably based on weather and other acts out of Stearns Electric's control, and all of the electrical infrastructure is still on-site, a ratcheted demand is charged to help cover the costs to own, operate and maintain the electric service.
- 11. How many months is the ratcheted demand lookback period?**
The ratcheted demand lookback period is 28 months.
- 12. How can a demand charge be lowered for an irrigation location that is rarely used?**
If an irrigation location is not used at all for 28 months, the irrigation demand would be lowered or possibly eliminated. Once the highest demand for the last 28 months drops off, our billing software will bill the next highest demand, from a billable irrigation month, until that is 28 months old. Consistent non-use of the irrigation system will result in lowered demand costs.
- 13. What is the excess demand charge per kWh?**
The excess demand charge is \$5.00 per kWh for usage during the billing months of June – August.
- 14. How are the irrigation Fixed Charge, energy rate and demand rate determined?**
The cost-of-service study performed by Stearns Electric Association suggests the rates that should be charged for our Interruptible Farm Irrigation program. The final rates are then voted on by the Board of Directors. Our rates were most recently updated in May 2026.
- 15. What if a member sells or rents out an irrigation location outside of the four billing months?**
The member transferring off Stearns Electric lines will receive a final bill for any kWh used since the last billing statement. The member transferring on Stearns Electric lines will receive their first billing statement during the first month the account is active between June and August.