

Meter Socket Bypass; Horn Bypass and Lever Bypass

When an electric meter requires maintenance or replacement, removal of the meter will cause an interruption in the electrical service to a residential or commercial building unless a Bypass is used. Oftentimes, mobile homes and manufactured homes are powered by a pedestal located at each home site. Utility personnel (never a homeowner) will engage the Bypass on a meter socket which allows the structure to remain energized while power has been rerouted away from the meter. In this situation, the homeowner or end user will enjoy uninterrupted power while utility personnel performs maintenance work. As a general rule, the pedestal is the property of the mobile home or manufactured home park, and the meter is the property of the utility company. Because of this, the utility company dictates what type of Bypass they want on the meter socket that powers the pedestal.

Two common types of meter socket Bypass are (1) Horn Bypass and (2) Lever Bypass. The meter on the pedestal is monitored and read by the local utility company who will maintain, service or replace the meter as necessary. Instances may be the utility company is upgrading and replacing the meter or it has stopped reporting/ sending usage to the utility company and needs to be inspected and serviced.

- (1) Horn Bypass – For a meter socket that has a Horn Bypass, utility personnel will use special bonding jumpers to connect the line and load side of the phases to bypass the meter socket. Since the Horn Bypass is relatively simple to use and does not add significant cost, some utilities feel it is the best Bypass solution for their area. Other utilities consider the Horn Bypass a safety threat due to the close proximity of service personnel to live conductors at the socket and the voltage potential that exists at the bypassed jaws when the meter is removed.
- (2) Lever Bypass – What a Lever Bypass does is redirect the power, sending it on an alternate path and bypassing the meter while the meter is safely removed from the meter socket by utility personnel. To use a Lever Bypass, simply move the lever into the up position to release the jaw clamping mechanism, then remove the meter and get to work. A common misconception is that a Lever Bypass on the meter socket is intended to shut the power off to a structure. Not true! The Lever Bypass is not a disconnect and will not discontinue the flow of power.

A Horn or Lever Bypass is not one-size fits all – different utility companies and regions have differing requirements for the type of Bypass they will allow.

