

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why are we investing in a new system when we have billing systems that work?

There are many reasons, including integrating 2 systems into one, increasing reliability, standardizing processes, mitigating financial losses, preparing for Regional Dialogue billing, leveraging best business practices with a commercial off the shelf (COTS) product, and many, many more. Further, the existing systems are unsupported vendor tools placing a huge risk and liability to BPA.

What is the name for the new billing system?

Customer Billing Center (CBC) system.

When is the system anticipated to go-live?

The CBC system will go-live (i.e., into production as the billing official source of record) on October 1, 2009. This means customers will receive their October bill issued from the new CBC System beginning November 2009.

Will customers receive one bill?

This is a long term goal, requiring additional discussion and requirements gathering and documentation. For the October 1, 2009 go-live, customers will continue to receive their Power and Transmission bill separately.

What is parallel testing?

Parallel testing (or operations) refers to running the new CBC system in parallel with the existing legacy systems and comparing the results. Parallel testing corrects problems and ensures accuracy prior to system go-live.

How long will we be in parallel test?

Parallel testing will begin on July 1, 2009 for 4 months. The details of the parallel test plan is still under development and is anticipated to be complete in mid June 2009. If you have any suggestions, please contact us.

What is the training strategy and timeline? Will there be training manuals?

Project leads and technical staff has been engaged in initial training to prepare for unit and system testing. The project employs a train-the-trainer approach with BPA staff (i.e., System Super Users) as the trainers. The project team has and will continue to develop training manuals for end users. End user training will occur in July 2009 and continue throughout parallel testing.

How will BPA customers be notified of changes to their bills?

The project team is working with Account Executives (AEs) in Power and Transmission to identify bill changes and impacts. In January, the team identified customers for comments and feedback. During August and September, the plan is to take the new bills to those customers. We will continue working with our customers throughout parallel testing and will inform everyone of expected changes before system go-live.

What changes are anticipated?

Below are some of the anticipated changes:

- For the bill package—All attachments to the invoice will be in a landscape orientation. In addition, Control Area (CA) will be changed to Balancing Authority (BA).
- Setting up and entering data will be different; development still in progress.

As we progress with testing, we will continue to update stakeholders on changes.

How can I be notified of upcoming changes?

System implementation updates will be available on www.bpa.gov/go/customerbilling or contact your AE for additional information.