

## **Water meter replacement**

The City has begun a multi-year project replacing water meters in homes and businesses across Red Deer to upgrade outdated or unreliable equipment, and install newer, more accurate technology.

### **Why is The City replacing my water meter?**

- Because The City and its customers rely on the reliability and accuracy of readings, we are moving to one of the latest industry standard technologies, Automatic Meter Reading (AMR).
- Some meters in the city are aging. Most have a lifespan of 20 to 30 years, after which time they require replacement.
- Our current metering equipment is no longer supported by the metering industry.

## **Billing**

### **Does The City need to estimate my consumption?**

The vast majority of meters continue to provide accurate and reliable water consumption data used to calculate water charges. However, we have identified some meters that provide inaccurate or inconsistent data, and these meters have been prioritized for replacement. In these cases, water and wastewater charges are based on estimated usage until the meter is replaced. Your bill's fixed charges will continue to be billed as normal. Once the new meter is installed and an actual reading is taken, an adjustment may be made to the customer's account based on actual water consumption where it can be determined.

### **How can I reduce my water bill?**

In some cases, water bills may increase slightly as new meters provide a more accurate account of water usage. Please see [www.reddeer.ca/water](http://www.reddeer.ca/water) to learn water conservation tips.

## **Automatic Meter Reading (AMR)**

### **How are the new meters read?**

As one of the latest industry standard technologies, Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) uses wireless technology similar to a cordless phone to deliver data from a water meter inside your home to meter reading staff collecting the data driving by. This technology is more cost-efficient over the long term and eliminates the need for meter reading staff to enter your property.

The new meters measure consumption in the same way current meters do, but new meters are equipped with a battery and communication chip. When meter reading staff drive by with a handheld device to collect a read, the handheld device "asks" the meter to send a quick, low-level radio frequency signal with water consumption information.

### **How are the current meters read?**

Right now, the meter inside your home is connected by a wire through a wall to the remote reader located outside your home. To get an actual reading, meter reading staff must enter your property to view the read from the outside.

**Are the new meters safe?**

The new meters use wireless technology to communicate with data readers in much the same way household devices such as cordless phones, cell phones, baby monitors, garage door remotes and wireless Internet routers work. Radio stations and these devices transmit signals through radio frequency, which is all around us. A quick signal is triggered when a handheld meter reading device activates the transmission of the signal. The amount of radio frequency transmitted by water meters is less than the signals transmitted by other day-to-day devices.

Health Canada says exposure to this kind of wireless technology does not pose any public health risk. Read more here: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/radiation/cons/radiofreq/index-eng.php>

**What about fire risk?**

You may have heard in the news about meters in Saskatchewan starting some minor fires. These SaskPower meters are a different kind of technology – **electric** meters, not water meters – and are made by a different manufacturer than the meters being installed by The City. These electric meters are connected to household power sources and installed on the home's exterior, where rain water and contaminants were determined to contribute to the failures. Our meters use a small battery and are not connected to a household power source.

In Ontario, no fires have been reported, but they're removing about 5,400 meters as a precaution because of the Saskatchewan issue. Again, these are electric meters. There are no known cases of a water meter failing in this manner.

**What about privacy?**

The privacy of customers is a priority for The City of Red Deer. When the data is sent from the meter to the meter reader, there is no personal profile information connected to that data. The information goes to a handheld device, which is then relayed to Enmax and to The City. Our City's Information Technology Services department ensures there are security protocols in place to protect transmission of the data. The information is shared with no one else.

**Installation work****Who will be conducting the work?**

The City has hired Metercor to implement its water meter replacement program. The contractor's customer service reps will contact customers in a priority sequence to schedule home appointments for meter replacement. Headquartered in Calgary, Metercor is a Canadian company responsible for installing 150,000 meters across the country since its inception in 1997.

**What happens during replacement?**

A Metercor service technician will visit you at the time of your scheduled appointment. The staff member will be uniformed and carrying identification. Someone aged 18 or over will need to be at home/place of business to provide access. The inside meter will be replaced with new equipment in under an hour, and in some cases within 30 minutes.

**Can I make my own appointment?**

Metercor will contact you in an order that will most efficiently reach areas by neighbourhood. Clustering home appointments by neighbourhood will keep costs down, reach more homes quickly, and prioritize areas of the city needing replacements. However, we will be flexible to the customer's needs.

**What will this cost?**

No charge is made to customers for water meter replacement; it is included in the utility service provided to customers.

**What happens to the old meter?**

Old meters will be recycled appropriately.

**Now that my meter's replaced, there's a wire inside and a reader box left on the exterior of my home. What should I do with these?**

It is up to you to decide what will be done with the wire and exterior box, which are no longer functional. You may choose to leave it as is or remove at your discretion. The City and its contractor do their best to leave the obsolete equipment behind with the least amount of disruption to your home's siding, ceiling panels, walls, etc.

**Further questions?**

Please contact:

**Utility Billing Service Centre**  
**The City of Red Deer**  
403-342-8203

**Metercor**  
**Customer Contact Centre**  
1-888-290-3070