

PROJECT FAQs

Water Meter Replacement

1. Why is the Town replacing water meters?

For a number of reasons:

- The Town and its customers rely on the accuracy of readings, we are moving to one of the latest industry standard technologies, Automated Meter Reading (AMR), which provides better accuracy and reliability.
- The Town is also implementing an infrastructure leak detection system that will help identify costly and damaging leaks on our mains and service lines.

2. When is the project starting and anticipated to be completed?

- The project is set to start in May of 2015, and anticipated to be completed by the end of summer of 2015

3. Who is installing the meters?

- The Town has hired Metercor to implement its meter replacement program. Metercor's Calgary based Customer Service Representatives will be scheduling appointments and its service technicians will be doing the installation work. The Canadian company, headquartered in Calgary, installs roughly 30,000 water meters per year here in Alberta.
- Metercor technicians will be wearing uniforms, have photo ID, be in marked company vehicles, and have all passed a police security clearance.

4. What happens during the 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 over 18 years of age must be at home/place of business to provide access. Typically, the inside meter will be replaced with new equipment in under an hour. Water service for this time period will be interrupted.

5. When do I make my appointment?

- You will be contacted from Metercor by letter and phone call to book your appointment. They will have appointments flexible to the Town's needs.

6. What does this cost?

- There will be no upfront charges as a result of the water meter replacement. The cost of the project will be reflected in a utility rate increase.

7. Do I need to do anything to prepare?

- **Water shut-off valve:**

It would be helpful if you could find the main water shut-off valve in your basement. This valve is located on a pipe that comes out of your basement floor. It usually has a coloured round or straight handle. Please clear the area around this valve so installers have full access.

- **Pets:**

It is also very important to have any in-home pets sequestered in a place where their well-being and the safety of the Installer will not be of issue.

8. After the meter is installed, how will the meters be read?

The meter has a radio transmitter attached that is used to perform the reading; no access to your property is required. Every month the utility will drive through the community and collect the consumption data for billing purposes.

9. How will this affect water billing?

- You will be billed based on the final read of the old meter and consumption of the new meter

10. 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, baby monitors, wireless internet, and garage door remotes work. Health Canada says exposure to this kind of wireless technology does not pose any public health risk.

11. Is my personal information protected?

- When the data is sent from the meter to the meter reader, there is no personal information connected to that data; only a meter reference information and water consumption data. The information goes to a reading device used by the Town, which is then uploaded by the Town for billing purposes.

12. Are these considered “smart meters” that I’ve heard about?

- The new meters are not smart meters.

13. Where is my water meter located?

- Most water meters are in the basement where the water line enters the house, just above the main water shut-off valve. The meter is about the size of a one-litre plastic container of ice cream.

14. I have a newly-finished basement, where will the meter go?

- A water meter is usually installed just above the main water shut-off valve in your home. This is usually in the basement and is located on a pipe that comes out of your basement floor. The new water meter will go in the place of the old water meter. If the water pipe is not exposed, the installers will need to expose the pipe in order to complete the work. The installer will offer options to finish the installation.

15. My shut-off valve doesn't work, how will the installer turn the water off?

- Metercor Installers have all the tools and experience required to stop the flow of water and install the water meter. In some more challenging cases however a return visit may be required.

16. Can my son/daughter allow access to the home if I am away?

- We require that an adult 18 years or older be home at the time of the appointment.

17. What are the benefits of Automated Metering?

- AMR will help the Town of Fort Macleod monitor sustainability and conservation practices as well as leak detection, potential backflow incidents, and ensures residents are billed for water consumption in an efficient manner. This process will ensure the Town's metering equipment is suitable for many years to come and will meet the goals of improved customer service, billing accuracy, and employee safety.

18. I hardly use any water yet my consumption is high. Why is this?

- Statistics Canada reports that the average person uses approximately nine (9) cubic meters per month. If you are far exceeding this per person amount, then you may have a leak in your plumbing or a running toilet.

19. Can my meter tell me if I have a leak?

- Yes, the easiest way to determine if there is a leak in the home is to make sure all the taps are turned off and that there is no water being used (including humidifiers, air conditioners and ice machines).

Go to the water meter, open the lid and see if there is any flow taking place. If so, there is a leak somewhere in the plumbing. Additionally, the water meter has an alarm icon on the display that will become active if there has been water usage every 15 minutes for the past 24 hours.