

Town of Carmel
Meter Installation Project
Frequently Asked Questions

1. *“Why is the water meter project being done?”*

Response: This project will assist with unaccounted for water usage, provide tools for water conservation, re-deploy staff to other needs of the Town and replace existing meters beyond their recommended service life. These benefits exceed the costs associated with the program and potential disruptions to the customers the project may incur.

2. *“Walk us through the installation process (shutdown to completion).”*

Response: The Contractor will send the customer up to three (3) post cards notifying the residents that they will be in the area and are requesting they call their company to set up an appointment to replace their meter. The Contractor will go to the residence, inspect the system and take necessary pictures. If the water system is in satisfactory condition the Contractor will exercise the house valve to determine if it is operational. If a good shut down occurs, the Contractor will replace the meter and the transmitter unit. The transmitter is turned on and logged into the satellite reader system. The Contractor will complete the installation by turning the house valve back on and cleaning up the work area.

3. *“Am I required to have the meter installed in my property?”*

Response: Yes, all property owners must participate in this program.

4. *“What is being completed?”*

Response: An automated reading system with a new meter will be installed to replace existing water meters in every home and business in the all thirteen water districts in the Town of Carmel. Using cellular technology similar to systems used by other utilities; the meter will transmit daily data (equivalent to a single line text message) back to the Comptroller’s Office for its use. The data will contain water consumption and notifications of any issues with the meter.

5. *“Who will be completing the installation?”*

Response: The Town has contracted with National Metering Services, Inc. to complete the installation of this project.

6. *“Is there any flexibility for installation day/time? For example, weekend meter installation.”*

Response: Yes, there are opportunities for the contractor to perform work during the early evening hours and on Saturday’s but these times require authorization by the Town. Since it would be impractical to conduct all the installation during these

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specialized hours, these time slots are reserved for special circumstances or hardships. We recommend exhausting the normal operational time first before requesting special appointments.

7. *“Do I have to be home during the installation?”*

Response: No as long as you designate another adult over the age of 18 to be present during the installation you are not required to be there.

8. *“I unknowingly covered up my meter when I finished my basement. Will the Town uncover the meter and repair the wall?”*

Response: Unfortunately, the Contractor will only replace a meter that is reasonably accessible. You will be responsible for providing reasonable access to the meter so as to permit the Contractor to change out the meter.

9. *“How much clearance is needed to install the meter?”*

Response: The meter shall be accessible to permit the operation of a pipe wrench to remove the meter off of the service line. The house valve controlling the flow of water into the structure shall be clear to be shut off. The Contractor must be able to remove the existing meter body and replace it with a new one.

10. *“The unit (reader) installation – will it be installed in the same location, using the same hole in the house?”*

Response: For those residences where this is applicable the new reading endpoint will be installed over the existing external reading unit area. The new installation will include a cover to conceal any marks or sealed holes that may exist from the old reader. However, the installer is willing to adjust its location if needed. If necessary, please contact the installer to review prior to scheduled installation.

11. *“Will my water be disrupted or turned off for a period of time?”*

Response: Your water service will only be shut during the replacement of the meter itself which is estimated to last for less than 10 minutes for a residential installation. Commercial installations will be longer due to the size of the meter.

12. *“What if the shut-off valve is stuck (not working)?”*

Response: The Town can turnoff water to the house through the curb stop valve near the main. If we are unable to exercise or locate this valve, the Contractor will deploy a device that will freeze the service line to stop the water flow. This method is an

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approved industry technique to work on a live service and will not damage the pipe.

13. *“How would I get my information if I do not have a smart phone or computer?”*

Response: You will be able to contact the Town of Carmel for information regarding your account. The Town will monitor significant leaks and low temperature alarms it receives and notify the owner.

14. *“What safe guards will be used to protect the computer system or the information from being hacked?”*

Response: The program is operated through a cloud system that is protected through firewalls and other means. This system has similar protections as other critical facilities (banks, retailers, etc.)

15. *“Is it possible for the meter to malfunction?”*

Response: Every electronic and mechanical item is subject to malfunction. However, the specified meter is known for its reliability.

16. *“How does the Town know the numbers transmitted are accurately?”*

Response: The meters are calibrated to AWWA Specification by the manufacturer to $\pm 1.5\%$ accuracy at low flow and the information transmitted from the meter is recorded to a file and stored on the meter. The meter also provides readout of the volume consumed at the meter head which can be manually read to verify the information is accurate transmitted or provide data to the town in case of a malfunction of the remote reading system.

17. *“Who will be looking at this information? For example, can people watch to see if homes are unoccupied for a period of time b/c of no water usage?”*

Response: Only select employees of the Town of Carmel will have access to individual accounts. Use of the program will be monitored by the Carmel Town Board.

18. *“What is the schedule for the installation throughout the water districts?”*

Response: The Contractor will be starting the installation of the new meters with the smaller districts first while the larger water districts will be installed last.

19. *“How is the transmitter powered?”*

Response: The transmitter is powered by a small battery in the unit. The battery has a service life of 15 years. The meter will send out an alarm when the battery is dying, permitting the Town to replace the entire transmitter unit located at the exterior of the house.

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20. *“Who is responsible for replacing the battery in the transmitter?”*

Response: The Town is responsible for replacing the battery.

21. *“What is the conversion factor for cubic feet to gallons?”*

Response: The conversion factor is 1 cubic feet equals 7.48 gallons. As some of the existing meters are measured in 100 cubic feet increments, this would equate to 748 gallons.

22. *“What is the lag time from when the meter is installed until the customer can access their account?”*

Response: The anticipated lag time for access to the account is about three (3) weeks after meter installation has been completed. This time may change depending on the installations as we proceed.

23. *“Is the reading technology unsafe?”*

Response: The meters will only broadcast a single line text message for approximately 5 seconds, once between two (2) and three (3) o'clock in the morning. This small amount of cellular service is substantially lower in exposure than most appliances in the home today.

24. *“What happens if the pipes are bad or damaged during installation?”*

Response: The Contractor has a Putnam County licensed plumber subcontracted for this project.

25. *“Will our water bill be higher? /Will my water consumption increase with the new meters?”*

Response: Your water bill may increase if your reading were estimated or your existing meter was inefficient or underperforming. Some existing meters are under-reporting the amount of water traveling through the meter. The new meters will have reading accuracies in excess of 98% and your bill may reflect the unaccounted for water that was unable to be recorded through an existing, underperforming water meter.

26. *“Will the information on the quarterly bill look different?”*

Response: Yes, all water bills will be computed in gallons instead of cubic feet. There may be other changes to improve the billing information to assist customers in understanding their bills.

27. *“If I don't have a smart phone or computer how I will detect a leak?”*

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Response: The Town will permit you to authorize a relative or confidant access to your remote account to facilitate the remote viewing and alarm notification of the program. The Town will also monitor any significant potential leaks or temperature alarms and, if needed, notify the customer of any potential issue. The Town will be available to assist the customer if needed.