

CITY OF PATTERSON (CITY) METERING SYSTEM REPLACEMENT PROJECT

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Q: Why is the City replacing its older water meters?

The City has begun a water meter replacement project to reduce water system losses for those water meters that are over 20 years old and/or have reached the end of their useful life. Water meters typically have a useful life of 15 to 20 years. The mechanics of a water meter slow down over time due to age and wear which results in the water meter not registering water usage accurately. This project will be on-going over the next 15-18 months focusing initially on meters that are over 15-years old with lower metering accuracy. The City will be hiring a contractor to replace the older meters in the water system which is funded by a low interest loan through the State Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program.

Q: Where is the water meter?

All meters are below ground in meter boxes with lids. Meter boxes are typically located near the sidewalk or curb at the front of the house or property.

Q: What does the water meter measure?

Meters are mechanical devices that record the volume of water passing from the City water supply lines to your property. The register on the meter is similar to a car odometer. Just as a car's odometer will not progress if the vehicle doesn't move, the numbers on a water meter register will not move unless there is water flowing through the meter.

Q: How is the water meter read?

Meters are read manually by City meter reader professionals who take great pride in accurately reading the usage indicated on the meter on a monthly basis. Meter readers are equipped with a handheld device which allows the meter reader to enter the reading recorded on the meter register. As an accuracy measure, the device is not equipped with the previous reading of any meter. The property's usage is later calculated in City utility billing when the readings are downloaded to the City's billing system.

Q: Are the new meters the same as the ones being replaced?

No, the existing water meters which were mechanical devices will be replaced with a new meter that employs the latest technology to measure water flow without moving parts, which translates to higher durability, minimal wear and increased accuracy to measure water flow.

Q: How will the new meters be read?

The new water meters will record hourly and daily read data that can be retrieved by periodically connecting to an automated cellular based reading system for future access. The new water meter will allow the City to collect hourly read data which will be made available online to each customer for future reference and tracking. The City will continue the monthly utility billing schedule.

Q: Will the City be able to identify if I have a leak?

Leaks can only be determined with the new meters through the evaluation of hourly meter reading data and customers could be informed of real time leaks when the new meters are in place. The City will notify customers electronically if the hourly read data indicates a leak may be occurring. A City service person can be dispatched to a customer address to inspect the meter and ensure no leaks are occurring on the premises. The customer is responsible for all piping and leaks on the customer's side of the meter.

Q: Will my water bill increase?

As meters age, they tend to run slower and may not measure all the water passing through the meter. The new meters will simply record consumption more accurately and depending on the age and accuracy of your existing meter, you may experience higher consumption due to the improved accuracy of the new meter.

Q: Will my water service be interrupted during the installation?

Yes, there will be a temporary service interruption for typically 15 to 30 minutes while the meter is replaced. The City will send a notification to your property at least one week prior to the installation. A City representative will place a door hanger on each property in the project at least one day prior to when the new meter is installed.

Q: Do I need to be home for the meter replacement work?

No, you don't need to be home. A City representative will leave a notice at your door after the work is completed.

Q: What should I do after the new meter is installed?

You should take this opportunity to check around your property for leaks. Dripping faucets, toilet leaks, and dripping hose bibs have the potential to use a lot of water. You may also want to check your sprinkler timers to be sure you are not over-watering and test each station to see if sprinkler heads are missing or clogged as this too can waste water.

Q: What's involved in replacing the water meter?

A City hired contractor will change out your old water meter and replace it with a new meter that will require your water service to be off for approximately 15 to 30 minutes. The process is simple: your service is turned off, the old meter is removed, the new meter is installed, and then your water service is turned back on. The contractor or City representative may turn on an available hose spigot to release air from your water line, and will notify you once your water service has been restored if you are at home. Otherwise, the City representative will leave a door hanger notification that the water meter has been replaced.

Q: How will I know the person installing the meter works for the City or Contractor?

All City representatives wear uniforms, drive a City vehicle with the City logo, and carry picture identification badges. The contractor will carry picture ID as well. If you have any concerns about the person doing the work, please contact the City at (209) 895-8060. City representatives or the contractor will not ask to enter your house.

Q: What about the plumbing from the water meter to my house?

The customer is responsible for the repair of defective plumbing or deteriorating pipes on the customer side of the meter. When such conditions prevent the meter replacement, the customer will be advised of the repairs needed.