

The City of Newark has selected Honeywell to upgrade its metering system to include automated meter reading (AMR) capabilities. This new AMR system will enable the City to remotely read your electric and water meters without the need to physically come to your home or business. To implement this program, Professional Meters, Inc. has been retained to remove your old meter and install a new meter equipped with a wireless transmitter. This brochure contains answers to many frequently asked questions that you may have. In addition, should you have additional questions regarding meter installation, please do not hesitate to call the installation firm toll free at 866-218-7880

Frequently Asked Questions

Water Meter Installation

- ***Where is my water meter?*** The majority of our water meters are located inside the house or business. In some instances the meters are below ground in concrete or plastic meter boxes with lids. Meter boxes are typically located near the sidewalk or curb or just off the roadway in the yard in front of the house.
- ***Why do water meters need to be replaced?*** As with any measuring device, meters can become less accurate as they age. Many water meters are over 20 years old and are due for replacement.
- ***Will my water service be interrupted during the installation?*** Yes. There will be a temporary interruption of water service while the meter is being replaced—typically about 10-20 minutes.
- ***Who is responsible for the meter set and valves at my meter?*** In accordance with City Code the customer is responsible for the repair or replacement of defective plumbing or deteriorating pipes from the curb valve towards the house including the “meter set” and associated valves. When such conditions prevent the meter replacement, the customer will be advised of the repairs needed.

Electric Meter Installation

- ***When will my electric meter be changed?*** Approximately 1-2 weeks prior to changing your electric meter you will receive a postcard in the mail informing you when crews will be in your neighborhood. You need not be present during the meter change out however, a toll free number will be provided should you want to schedule an appointment.
- ***Does someone need to come into my home to change my meter?*** In most cases no, as long as the existing meter is on the exterior of the building and accessible.
- ***Do I need to be home for my electric meter to be changed?*** No. As long as your meter is accessible, you need not be home at the time your meter is changed. Meters within enclosed areas or fenced areas where a dog is present may require the property owner be home to provide access. PMI will leave a door hanger or mail a post card to restricted access services in order to set a convenient appointment time.
- ***Will my electric service be interrupted during the meter change out process?*** Yes. A temporary electric service interruption will occur at the time of meter change. This interruption should be limited to only a few minutes.
- ***I had a tag on my door asking me to schedule an appointment. Why do I need to do that?*** If you had a door tag asking you to call us, the most likely reason is that we were unable to gain access to your meter. It may be on an enclosed porch or perhaps a dog was present.

General Installation Questions

- ***Will the new meter cost me anything extra at the time of installation?*** No. The cost for the new meter is included in the cost for your electricity and water.
- ***Who will install the meter?*** Installers from Professional Meters, Inc. will install meters. Installers will have uniforms with logos.

- **Will my water or electric bill increase?** Older **water meters** tend to run a little slower and may not measure all of the water going through them. Although the new meter will be more accurate, the increase in water measured through your meter should be small and should have a minimal impact on your water bill. You should notice no increase in you **electric** bill as a result of the meter changeout program. However, the ability to more accurately monitor community water and electric usage will help the City plan for our future needs.

General Questions

- **Are the new meters the same as the ones being replaced?** The new meters have no moving parts and use magnetic principles to measure the water. The new meters will also be equipped with transmitters to enable the City to collect readings using wireless transmission of data.
- **What if there is a leak at the water meter or any other problem after the meter has been replaced?** Please call Professional Meters, Inc., at (866) 218-7880. Service personnel from this firm will determine the cause of the leak or problem and take appropriate action.
- **You are just changing my meter to get more money?** While it is true that the new meters are more accurate this project is being implemented to increase efficiencies with the system, reduce costs, and allow us to use the increased revenue to fund this project and a variety of other improvements to city services such as allowing city workers to access the city computer network from the field so that work activities can be entered and accessed in the field versus waiting till they get back to the office. We will also be able to read the water and electric meters without sending people into the field. Meter readings will be gathered and processed automatically. Without the cost savings inherent in this project we would have replaced meters over time and in the end not have all of the other ancillary elements discussed above.
- **I am concerned about the danger of radio waves and my health?** We have more detailed information on our web site but I can assure you that the incremental difference these devices will make, when one considers all of the other transmissions that are taking place, is insignificant. When one considers the cell phones, cordless phones, baby monitors, wireless networks, etc that we currently have and the fact that all of these devices are located much closer to us. One would have to camp out by the water meter and be there at the right moment once an hour that the unit transmits. In the case of the electric meter one would need to be outside the house when the unit transmits. The signal strength from both meters decreases to the square of the distance. At two inches it is 4 times less than 0 inches, 3 inches it is 9 times less, at 4 inches 16 times less, 5 inches 25 times less, etc.
- **I understand that these meters are not reliable?** The electric meters are inherently accurate, have no moving parts and are completely electronic. If they fail they stop working they do not speed up. The water meters also have no moving parts, use magnetic technology to measure the flow of water, and are guaranteed to be accurate for 20 years.
- **My water bill increased dramatically since the new meter was installed?** The meters that we are replacing have been in the system for as many as 30 years. The service life of this type of meter is typically 15 years after which time the accuracy falls off rapidly. That you noticed an increase in your consumption is a result of the more accurate meter. If you are interested we have many water saving tips on our web site as well as on the web in general.
- **May I opt out? I am concerned about my health?** We do not have a process to allow one to opt out of the system. We have information on our web site regarding the system we are using and the relative risk compared to other electrical and communication equipment.
- **I am concerned that someone can gather information about me and my family from the transmissions?** This is

a widely circulated story and is based on comparisons to outdated technology that we are not using. The signals from our equipment are encrypted and would be extremely difficult for an individual to compromise. That an individual went to the trouble he or she would probably try to listen to your cell phone, hack your wireless router, or crack the code to your garage door opener.

- **Why is it that I have to replace the Water meter yoke and valves?** According to City Code and consistent with many other utilities the meter yoke and all piping and valves after the curb stop are the responsibility of the homeowner. Through visual inspection we have determined that the current equipment is no longer serviceable and likely to break if we try to work with it.
- **Why is it that I have to replace the Electric meter base?** According to City Code and consistent with policies at many other utilities the wires attached to your house and all equipment thereafter including the meter base are the responsibility of the homeowner. Through visual inspection we were able to determine that the meter base or other aspects of the electrical service are deficient and not safe or suitable for us to be able to install the new meter. That we could not install the new meter necessarily means that there is a safety hazard that should be resolved at the earliest possible time.
- **Why does the worker have to enter my house to change the water meter?** Water meters at the City of Newark are typically located in the home. This is a typical installation method. Appointments are scheduled in a 2 hour window and you can be notified when they are getting ready to visit if you work in proximity that you can meet them at the door. The meter replacement appointment should take approximately 30 minutes.
- **Who should I talk to to schedule an appointment?** Please call Professional Meters Incorporated (PMI) at 866-416-0223. I can transfer you if you would like.
- **I see that you have changed the water rates; I understood that they were staying the same?** The rates did not change. The change we made is that we will now bill in Gallons instead of Cubic Feet. The old rate was based on a \$/100 cubic feet rate and the new rate is based on a \$/1000 gallons. One cubic foot is 7.48 gallons so when we changed from 100 cubic feet to 1000 gallons it was the equivalent of changing from a rate of \$/748 gallons to \$/1000 gallons. If you think about a simple rate of one penny per gallon expressed in cubic feet one would pay \$.74/100 cubic feet (748gallons) or expressed in gallons one would pay \$1.00/1000 gallons. We have only changed the unit of measure. The cost of a unit of water has not changed.
- **Why did you change from billing in Cubic Feet to Gallons?** We made the change to eliminate confusion about cubic feet. It is not a common unit of measure (1 cubic foot equals 7.48 gallons) and caused more problems and really had no benefit to us internally. Furthermore the County bills for sewage in gallons so we had multiple units of measure to deal with so we took this opportunity to make the switch.
- **There is a clear plastic box on the outside of my house with an X on it. What is it and may I remove it?** That was the remote register that we used with the old meter so that we could read the meter without entering your house. The X indicates that you have a new water meter and may remove the old device and wire attached to it as you see fit.
- **There is a black puck shaped device with a white X on it. What is it and may I remove it?** That was the remote touch pad that we used with the old meter so that we could read the meter without entering your house. The X indicates that you have a new water meter and may remove the old device and the wire attached to it as you see fit.

- ***I had my meter changed last year as part of a test. Why is it being changed again?*** The previous meter replacement that PMI performed allowed us to determine the accuracy of our current meters. We tested both residential and commercial meters. The residential and some commercial meters are the same type as are currently being installed with two major exceptions:

1. The old meter read in cubic feet and we are switching to a gallon measurement
2. We need to install a communication device to allow the meter to talk with our meter reading equipment.

During the current visit your “old meter” will be replaced with a new meter and transmitter assembly. The old meter will be taken back to the shop where it will be reprogrammed to read in gallons and reset to zero so that we can reinstall it in another home.

The commercial meters may also be the type we are ultimately installing and need to be changed for the same reasons stated above.

There may be other commercial meters that were installed that are of a different type than we are going to use and or we removed the old meter tested it and put it back in that same day. In either case we need to install a new meter that is correctly programmed to read in gallons with the appropriate communication capability.