

Automated Meter Reading

Project Overview

What is Automated Meter Reading?

AMR is the use of technology that collects consumption and status data from a water meter and transfers that data to our office computer system for billing, troubleshooting, and analysis.

The current meter system consists of a meter (typically located on the entrance plumbing in the basement) that is wired to a touchpad which is usually mounted on the outside wall of the building. Our meter reader visits each building and obtains the meter reading via handheld computer from the touchpad. The readings are stored in the handheld computer and downloaded to our billing system.

In this project we will be replacing the touchpad with a radio transceiver unit (or “endpoint”). The endpoint will send water use data to a nearby data collector which in turn will transmit daily to our computers in our business office.

Why is the District doing this project?

The primary reason for upgrading our meter reading system is to save money. There are approximately 7,000 meters in our system. We read each meter once every three months and it takes two weeks per month on average to read the meters.

The AMR system will reduce labor costs and vehicle expenses by eliminating the need for a meter reader to physically obtain meter readings. The system will be more efficient and environmentally friendly than the current system.

AMR will also provide better customer service. The system will provide us with daily status information for each meter. We will be able to notify customers of higher than normal water consumption much sooner than with our current system. In addition, we will be able to obtain nearly instantaneous readings for producing final bills when a property is sold or when a tenant moves out. We will also have more information available to answer billing questions.

We are not making any promises but eventually we expect that it will enable us to improve our service to you by allowing us to bill monthly and electronically. We think our customers would rather get a monthly bill for \$25 than a quarterly bill for \$75.

What work will you do at each building?

At each metered building we will replace the meter with a new one, and replace the outside touchpad with a radio transceiver. In some cases we will be able to use the existing wire that runs from the meter to the touchpad. Most of the time, though, we will run a new wire.

Our work should take less than an hour, and the water will be off for a short time while we replace the meter.