

YOUR WATER METER IS GETTING SMARTER!



**SMART WATER METERS HAVE
COME TO DOUGLAS COUNTY!**

Douglas County's extreme drought of 2007 brought a new awareness to the importance of conserving the world's most valuable natural resource — water, and WSA is committed to its continued conservation and preservation. A new component of our conservation program is a project which enables us to better record low-flow usage, allows us to more quickly identify leaks on your side of the meter, and helps us identify problems with our water system more rapidly, all of which will help reduce the amount of water wasted.

The project involves the replacement of all water meters in our system with state-of-the-art technology. Many of the meters in WSA's water system today are over 15 years old and need to be replaced. Just like people, they have a tendency to slow down with age. As a result, over time they can sometimes under-record the actual low-flow usage. The cost to replace them for newer ones of the same kind is just not cost effective.

Water meter state-of-the-art technology is commonly known as "smart metering". Smart meters are electronic meters and have been widely used since the 1980's. The new technology in the meters is a small transmitter that sends meter data via radio frequency to a collector unit or transmitter where it collects the meter read data and transmits it to the billing system. The billing staff reviews and processes the data, and a bill is generated.

Here's what smart metering improvements will mean for you. Instead of a meter reader coming to your property once a month to read your meter, your meter data will be read electronically. Smart metering will give WSA the ability to collect continuous readings from the location from one month to the next. In addition, this will be a tool for us to help you detect if you



have a leak on your side of the meter, thus cutting down on the valuable time and amount of water you would otherwise lose to a leak. For example, a meter showing consumption continuously 24 hours a day is a good indication there is a leak. Also, when you call with a concern about your water bill, representatives will be able to pull up your account and actually see your usage by hour for the past month.

Because most fixtures and appliances manufactured since 1993 have been designed to use less water (i.e., toilets, dishwashers, showers, etc.), new meters being manufactured are designed to detect and record flows as low as 1/8 of a gallon per minute. Meters used in the last 25 years have only been able to read water used at a rate of 1/4 of gallon per minute, or more. Depending on the age and accuracy of your current meter, your usage patterns, the number of low-flow fixtures in your home, and other factors such as any conservation measures you exercise in your home, you may or may not see a slight increase in your water bill once the new meter is installed.

With 42,000 meters to replace, it is estimated it could take approximately six years to complete this state-of-the-art water meter replacement program. As the project moves from one area of the county to another, you'll be notified by a letter a few weeks prior to it coming to your area. This will be followed by a door hanger a few days before the work is performed. As the program progresses through the county, our website at www.ddcwsa.com will post periodic updates.



For more information concerning the smart meter implementation program, please contact Customer Service at (770) 949-7617 during business hours from 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM Monday—Friday.

Douglasville-Douglas County
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Telephone: (770) 949-7617
Website: www.ddcwsa.com

Frequently Asked Questions:



How is the meter read?

Instead of a meter reader coming to your property once a month, the smart meter will send water usage data by wireless radio transmitters installed on the meter to a collector unit which collects the meter read data and transmits it to the billing system at WSA.

Where are the collector units located?

The collector units are located on Authority-owned property and in some WSA vehicles.

What powers the radio transmitter on my meter?

The transmitter is a battery-powered device with an expected battery life of 20 years, the expected life of the meter.

Will the radio transmitter interfere with my television, cordless phone, or garage door?

No, the radio transmissions occur on a frequency different from those used by television signals, cordless phones, and garage doors.

I read and hear about the publicity and concerns over claims of possible health effects due to radio frequency emissions from cell phone use. Should I be concerned about the smart meter radio frequency?

As is the case with most public concern issues, you can find information to support whichever side of the issue you are on. WSA follows the guidelines of the government entity in charge of the particular issue at hand, whether it's related to water distribution, wastewater treatment, or stormwater management, etc. In the case of radio frequency emissions, WSA follows the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) guidelines. The smart water meter transmits at power levels that are a tiny fraction of the FCC limits. Exposure to radio frequency energy is partially based on the transmitter's power and your distance from the source (the higher the frequency and the shorter its wavelength, the greater the energy). A smart water meter is in the ground outside, and a cell phone is next to your ear. For additional information, please visit our website at www.ddcwsa.com.

Does this mean that my bill will be increasing?

It depends on the age and accuracy of your current meter, your usage patterns, the number of low-flow fixtures in use, and the conservation measures in place. Meters used in the last 25 years have only been able to read water used at a rate of 1/4 of a gallon per minute, whereas the new meters being manufactured are designed to detect and record flows as low as 1/8 of a gallon per minute. In locations where the current meter has slowed down with age, the meter may have been underreporting the actual usage (the water that goes through the meter), so you may or may not see a slight increase in your water bill once the new meter is installed. Your bill will always be calculated on exactly the number of gallons of water you use during each billing cycle.

Will this change how often I receive a bill?

No. You will continue to receive a bill once a month and your billing statement will not change.

What will be the cost to me for this new meter?

There is no charge to you for the new smart meter.

Will my account information be secure?

Yes. Only usage data and meter serial numbers are transmitted. Personal customer information is not transmitted. The system uses technology that was originally developed by the US military for secure communications.

Will I have to be home during the installation?

No, but if someone *will* be home, please make plans for any water use which might be critical during that hour without water service.

Will there be any interruption in my service during installation?

Your water will be turned off, the replacement made, and the water turned back on in less than an hour in most cases.

Will my yard be left the way it was prior to the installation?

The lawn around the meter will be restored to its pre-installation condition.