

Automatic Meter Reading Project (AMR)

Introduction

The City of Phoenix Water Services Department is replacing water meters in selected areas of the city, but before the project is completed, all meters throughout the city will be replaced with Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) equipment. Below is a list of frequently asked questions regarding this project.

Why is Phoenix converting its meters to AMR?

Phoenix decided to take on this project for several reasons - employee safety, improve meter reading accuracy, and increase efficiency. First, employee safety: Water Services meter readers encounter numerous situations every day in regards to safety, whether it be a dog, a hard to access meter, a large commercial compound meter that requires special measures and equipment, a heavily traveled street with no place to park, and numerous other situations that prevents meter readers from performing their duty safely. Second, improving accuracy: when the average meter reader is reading more than 400 meters a day, mistakes can happen. This can result in a meter reader going back to a residence or business to re-read the meter. The accuracy gained by using an AMR system can greatly reduce errors, and consequently, reduce the need to re-read meters. Lastly, increase efficiency: Phoenix Water Services has tried very hard to manage its existing and new accounts without adding staff, but to do so a "best practice" level of efficiency is sometimes sacrificed. In order to meet the current and future demands of our customer's needs, it was important that AMR be brought in so the quality of customer service can be enhanced.

How long will this project take to complete?

It will take approximately eight years to complete. Phoenix maintains more than 400,000 water meters within its 540 square mile service area, so this project is very large in scale.

How long does it take to install the new AMR meter?

Under normal circumstances, residential water meters with AMR take about 30 minutes to install. Commercial meters may take longer, depending upon their size.

Will there be any interruption to my water service during the meter installation?

During installation, water to your home or business will be interrupted for approximately 30 minutes. However, Water Services staff will attempt to contact home

or business owners prior to installing the new meter. If a home or business owner is not present, Water Services staff will still perform the installation if the meter is accessible.



Water Meter with AMR device attached

What if my water meter is inaccessible?

If your water meter is inaccessible for whatever reason, Water Services staff or one of our contractors will leave a door hanger requesting that the home or business owner notify us to make arrangements so we can access the meter to perform the installation.

Will the electronic device on the meter interfere with other electronic equipment?

AMR equipment operates at a very low-level radio frequency and will not interfere with or operate any other electronic devices such as garage door openers, televisions, cordless or cellular phones, wireless computer networks , Internet access, and cardiac pacemakers.

How do you electronically collect the meter reads?

The new meter will have an ERT device (Encoder, Receiver, Transmitter) connected to it that operates under a low-power radio frequency. Once the system is operational, Water Services staff just need to walk, bike, or drive down the street and collect meter reads with a handheld computer or a computer that is mounted in a city vehicle. Each ERT has it's own identification number so their is no confusion as to which service address belongs to which meter.



Water Services staff collecting meter reads with mobile unit

Has this new AMR equipment been tested for accuracy and reliability?

Yes, this equipment has gone through numerous tests for billing accuracy and system reliability. A two-year pilot project tested the equipment in various neighborhoods throughout the city. The results of the pilot project were successful.

How will this project effect my monthly water bill?

For the most part, customers will not notice any change in their monthly billings. However, a slight increase in a bill may occur. This can be attributed to the old replaced meter providing a lower inaccurate read, and the new meter providing a higher, yet accurate, read. If you have had a new meter installed and your bill has increased significantly, please contact our Customer Services Division at 602-262-6251.

Who do I contact if I have other questions regarding this project?

For all questions about this project that have not been answered above, please contact the Phoenix Water Services Customer Services Division at 602-262-6251, or contact them via e-mail at water.customer.service@phoenix.gov