

City of Suisun's Water Meter Upgrade Project

Overview

The City's Water Meter Upgrade Project is a step toward a more modernized water metering system that will help our community better manage our water resources. The upgrades will include exchanging the current water meters for new meters with Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI). AMI uses a low-powered communication device that's added to your new water meter to transmit hourly water usage information over a secure network approximately four times per day.

Benefits

This new technology will help SSWA identify high water usage and potential leaks. These new meters will also allow SSWA to implement an automated meter reading process that will provide better customer service, greater data accuracy, and reduced operational costs. Every water customer will receive a new meter at no cost.

What to Expect with Your Meter Upgrade

The Suisun-Solano Water Authority (SSWA) has contracted with Professional Meters, Inc., (PMI) to upgrade your existing water meter. This project started on May 20, 2019 and should be completed by September 30, 2019. The installer will have identification that shows he or she is a representative of PMI or the City. You are not required to be present during this meter upgrade if your meter is outside and accessible. The work will require a brief water interruption while the meter is being upgraded, which should last no more than 30 minutes for residential properties.

Pre-Installation for Residential Properties

- Approximately one month prior to installation, letters will be sent to all physical addresses of the water meters to be replaced.
- One to two weeks prior to the installation, a postcard will be mailed to the physical address of the meter to let you know that the contractor, PMI, will be in your area to install your new water meter.
- Appointments will be scheduled for customers on an as-needed basis. This includes appointments for customers who have a water critical need or meters that are inaccessible to the installer. Please contact PMI at 866-965-0657 (toll free) to schedule an appointment to upgrade the water meter.

Pre-Installation for Commercial Properties

- A letter will be sent to all physical addresses of the commercial properties requesting the business schedule an appointment with PMI to upgrade the water meter as the water will need to be shut-off during normal business hours to replace the meter.
- Please call PMI at 1-866-965-0657 (toll free) to schedule an appointment to upgrade the water meter at your business.
- If you do not schedule an appointment, your meter will be upgraded when PMI is working in your area. You will be notified that your meter is scheduled for upgrades at least 48 hours before the service interruption begins.

How You Can Help

Let family members or tenants know about the upcoming installation and provide safe access to the water meter, generally located in your driveway or near the sidewalk, by:

- Clearing any obstructions, trimming plants or bushes;
- Unlocking any gates that would block installer access; and
- Securing pets away from the water meter.

Day of Installation

- On the day of installation, the installer will visit your meter box and exchange your current water meter for a new AMI meter. The installation takes about 30 minutes to complete, during which the water will be shut off for about 15 minutes. When the work is complete, the installer will leave a door hanger which explains the procedure that took place, communicates any further action(s) needed by the customer if the meter was unable to be exchanged and provides instructions for flushing the water line prior to use.
- Pre and post installation photographs will be taken.
- Installers will arrive in a vehicle that has the PMI logo on it.
- Installers will be wearing a bright yellow t-shirt that has the PMI logo on it.
- Installers will be wearing a PMI Identification Badge with photo.

Post-Installation

- After installation of your new meter, you may still see PMI or City employees in the area conducting quality assurance audits on the installations performed in your neighborhood.
- Once your new meter is installed, the water usage information will be collected in 15 minute intervals. The data will transmit every 24 hours (once per day) via a secure radio transmission.

How is this AMI meter different from other meters?

Water meters are typically installed near driveways or sidewalks, away from your home. The communication device is battery powered and is off most of the time. It only turns on for a fraction of a second per day to securely transmit your water usage data. The AMI meters do not communicate with other meters, or with appliances in the home or business, and cannot turn on or turn off your water service.

Vehicle Logo



Badge Front

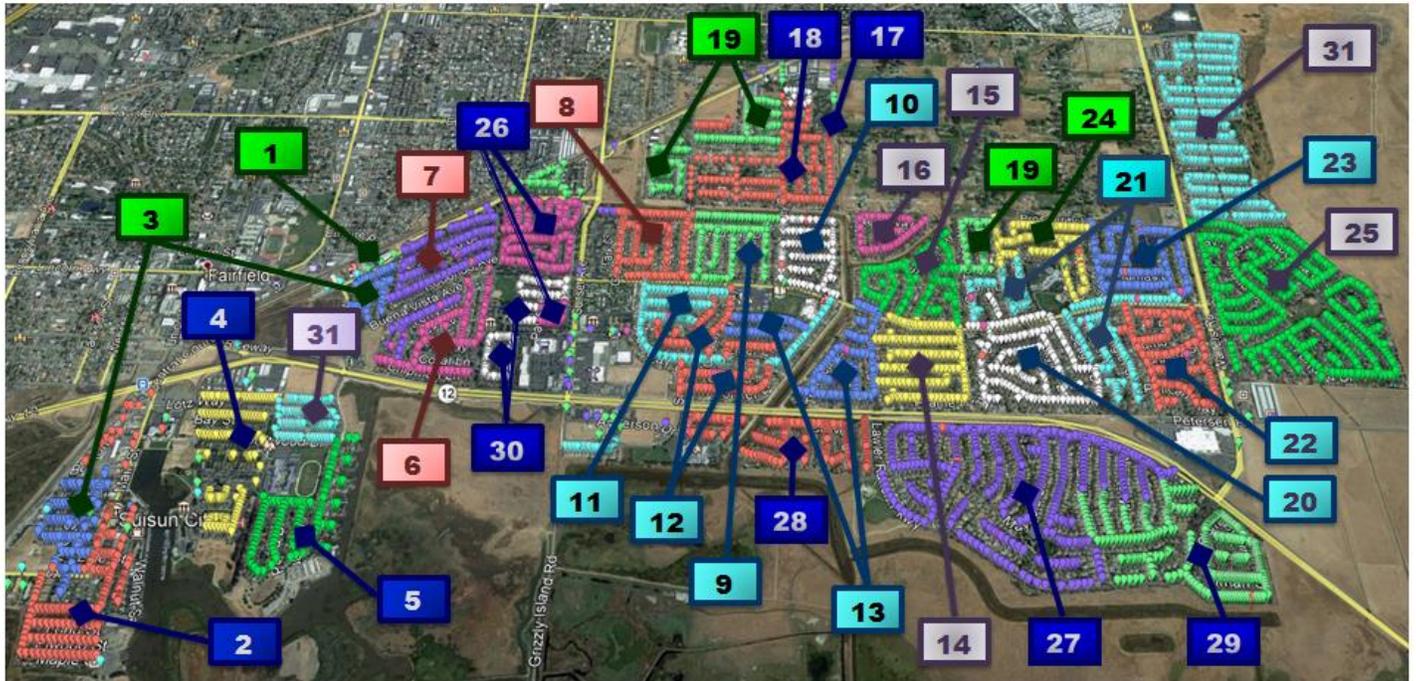


Badge Back



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Route Map and Anticipated Installation Schedule



Residential Letter Notification Sent One Month Prior to Working in Area.	Residential Postcard Notification Sent Two Weeks Prior to Working in Area.	June 24 th - July 12 th Active and Upcoming Working Areas.	The Water Meter Upgrade has been Completed in most of this Area!	Not In Area Yet.
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Week of	*Routes to be Installed	Week of	*Routes to be Installed
May 27 th	27, 29	August 12 th	20
June 3 rd	29, 28		
June 10 th	30, 26		
June 17 th	17, 18		
June 24 th	5, 18		
July 1 st	2, 4		
July 8 th	2, 4		
July 15 th	**1, 3		
July 22 nd	**1, 3, 19		
July 29 th	19, 24		
August 5 th	21		

*Routes will be updated weekly based on weekly upgrade production levels

**Route 1 also incorporates Mankas Corner and Suisun Valley Road areas which are not shown in the above map

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Frequently Asked Questions

Why do I need a new water meter?

- The city will be initiating a proactive meter replacement program, to replace meters that have reached the end of their useful life.

What is AMI?

- AMI stands for Advanced Metering Infrastructure. AMI consists of a low-powered communication device that is added to your new water meter. The communication device will collect your meter reading every 15 minutes. The device transmits water every 24 hours (once per day) via a secure radio transmission.

How is this AMI meter different from other meters?

- The communication device is battery powered and is off most of the time. It only turns on for a fraction of a second per day (totaling approximately 2 ½ minutes per year) to securely transmit your water usage data. The AMI meters do not communicate with other meters, or with appliances in the home, and cannot turn on or turn off your water service.

How will my water meter be replaced?

- The current water meters will be replaced with new AMI meters in the existing meter boxes. The installation crew will assess the need for any repairs to the meter or surrounding infrastructure. The City and / or the City's contractor may need to clear the area surrounding the meter box in order to allow access. Please trim plants and bushes and clear any obstructions from around the meter box prior to your meter install.

What is the power source for the AMI meter and how often does it transmit my meter reading?

- The AMI communication device is powered by special batteries, similar in technology to those used in pacemakers. The communication device is off most of the time. It only turns on for a fraction of a second per day (totaling approximately 2 ½ minutes per year) to securely transmit your water usage data.

With this new technology will the City be able to shut off my water meter remotely for any reason, including a water leak or for non-payment?

- No. The new AMI technology will not have remote shut-off capabilities.

How does the City ensure the new meters are accurate?

- The meters use electronic registers that are guaranteed by the manufacturer to be accurate. The meter technology has been rigorously tested by manufacturers and implemented in many large water utilities throughout the country. All meters are tested by the manufacturer prior to leaving the factory.

Why is my water bill higher than normal?

- The new water meters will have a higher level of accuracy compared to the old meters that have reached the end of their useful life. Customers may see an increase in their water bill based on the new meter's higher level of accuracy.
- However, an unusually high water bill is most often caused by a leak or change in water use. Other common causes of high water bills include:
 - A leaking toilet or a toilet that continues to run after being flushed.
 - A dripping faucet or shower.
 - Filling or topping off a swimming pool or spa.
 - Irrigation system issues.
 - Guests or kids home for summer vacations or school holidays.
 - Water-cooled air conditioners.
 - A broken water pipe or appliance / fixture leak.
 - Water softener problems where the unit cycles continuously.

Is AMI secure?

- The City is, and always has been, committed to safeguarding customer privacy. Communications from the customer's meter to the City's data portal is transmitted over a RF channel, using technology that meets or exceeds current industry standards.

The meters do not transmit customer account numbers, names or other personal identifying information.

How do I know that the billing data being sent is actually my data and does not belong to someone else?

- Each communication device has a unique identification number, which is transmitted along with the meter reading. Before the data received is used for billing, the unique identification number which is associated with your water meter serial number and address are validated numerous times to ensure accuracy and privacy. This process helps ensure you are billed correctly for your water usage. Additionally, after the meter reading is downloaded into the billing software, City billing personnel look for any anomalies that would indicate a problem such as unusually high or low consumption.

Are there any health hazards associated with the new technology?

- No. The equipment operates at a low-power radio frequency, comparable to a cordless telephone. All equipment operates in compliance with state and federal communication standards. Water meters are typically installed away from the house so potential exposure is very limited; the communication device only turns on for a fraction of a second per day (totaling approximately 2 ½ minutes per year).

Do the AMI communication devices meet Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Radio Frequency (RF) limits??

- Like all commercially available telecommunication equipment, the AMI communication devices are required to meet Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Radio Frequency (RF) limits. Equipment manufacturers have vigorously tested and reviewed independent lab results demonstrating that the communication devices meet or exceed FCC limits. Common household items like cell phones, microwave ovens, baby monitors, cordless telephones and Wi-Fi routers emit much more radio frequency energy than AMI meters.
- For more information on the FCC guidelines followed, please go to:
www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/human-exposure-radio-frequency-fields-guidelines-cellular-and-pcs-sites.