

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

Advanced metering or smart water meters help conserve water and ensure a better water future for the City of Greeley. Working with our customers is the best way to reduce water use, improve the reliability and sustainability of our water system, and minimize costs. Smart meters provide an outstanding foundation for strong collaboration with our customers. Customers with access to smart water meters will have the tools and information to help save water and save money.

### **Why Is The City Undertaking This Effort?**

Advanced metering systems are quickly becoming the standard for utilities around the country. These new devices allow for more accurate and faster collection of water usage readings than the current manual method and improve safety conditions for City staff. Currently, the meter reader staff must drive by every meter box to obtain a reading from the meter. Introducing automatic meter reading as the standard for Greeley is one of the ways we can better serve our customers and improve the overall efficiency of the utility department, as staff will be utilized for more critical functions, and gasoline consumption will be reduced.

### **How many meters will be changed?**

The City received a total of \$3.5 million U.S. Bureau of Reclamation grant money to replace 29,500 meters before 2026. The money will be used to replace meters installed in the 1990s and prior. Most newer subdivisions already have advanced meters installed.

### **Why is my water meter being replaced?**

Over time, meters become less accurate and can provide inaccurate readings. By replacing meters, our City will be able to bill more accurately and efficiently for water usage. In addition, the new system will include improved meter reading technology that will save labor time, prevent recording errors, minimize wear and tear on vehicles, minimize the need for city employees to go on the private property of our customers, and water leaks will be identified earlier by analysis of data collected.

### **Does this mean my bill will be increasing?**

Not necessarily. In cases where rates remain consistent, the new meters will simply record consumption more accurately. In some cases, your bill may increase, but only if the current meter is underreporting usage. While most customers' bills currently reflect the amount of water they are using, some old water meters do not capture all the water being used. This condition is not fair to all customers. The City will not retroactively bill customers whose meters may have under-reported water use. The new system will ensure fairness and equality for all customers from this point forward.

### **When will this work be performed?**

The work will be performed during normal working hours of 8:00AM – 4:00PM (MT).

### **How do I schedule an appointment?**

For residential customers, no appointment is necessary. If you are a commercial customer with a meter requiring an appointment, the UMS Call Center will reach out to you ahead of installation.

**How will this affect my service?**

Based on a pre-determined route scheduled by the City of Greeley, the city-approved contractor, Utility Metering Solutions (UMS), will come to your residence and replace your existing water meter. The water meter will be checked to verify that water is presently not in use. If no water is being used, the meter will be replaced. There will be an interruption of service for approximately 15 – 20 minutes during the change, but after that, you will experience the same great service that you've come to expect. In most cases, it's a simple procedure that will require about 30 - 60 minutes in total.

**How do I know who is authorized to do the work?**

The City of Greeley has contracted with Utility Metering Solutions (UMS) to complete the meter upgrade throughout the City. All UMS installers will have an ID badge indicating their name and their employment with UMS and will be wearing bright yellow t-shirts/jackets/vests with "UTILITY METERING SOLUTIONS" or "UMS" on the back. Installers will travel in vehicles that have a large "UMS" magnet on the side. All UMS installers have successfully completed a comprehensive criminal background check.

**Do I have to be present for the installation if the meter is outside my home?**

No. Since the meter is outside of your home, you do not need to be present.

**Why was I not able to turn on my water after the meter was installed?**

In rare instances, the main cut-off valve to your home may be left off. This will occur when the Utility Metering Solutions installation team is not able to pressurize your home following the installation. This condition applies to outside water meters only. The normal cause of this condition is when an inside spigot is opened during the installation and subsequently left open. The water is not turned back on to ensure a sink or bathtub does not overflow with the customer is not home. In these cases, your water will be left off and a door hanger will be left on your door. Call the point of contact on this door hanger to have your water turned back on immediately.

**Is there any special care or maintenance that I need to do to my new meter?**

No, your new water meter does not require any maintenance by the homeowner. As before, the City of Greeley will take care of all maintenance. However, please know that this new meter has transmitting technology that allows your meter to be read remotely.

**Will wireless technology affect my health or privacy?**

The technology in your new smart meter uses the cellular network to transmit meter data. These transmissions will not negatively affect your health or privacy. The wireless portions of the system will be operated according to Federal Communications Commission rules and will not interfere with other radio frequencies in the area. The transmitters use one-quarter of the power of a cellphone transmission. In fact, exposure to radio waves from smart meters is tiny compared to cellphones transmissions and other electronics within a typical home. Total transmission time is typically less than 5 seconds per day.

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

No. The radio transmission operates in compliance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations to avoid interference with other electronic devices.

**Can I access daily readings online?**

Yes, when your meter is fully implemented, water customers will have the ability to access their daily water consumption online in one-hour increments through the WaterSmart Program.

**Does my meter have to be replaced?**

Yes. All meters will be changed to be read by the automated metering infrastructure technology. Customers cannot choose to remain on the older manual reading system.

**How will I know that you have my reading and not someone else's?**

Each radio frequency device has a unique identification number, which is transmitted along with the meter reading. The unique number is compared to your account record electronically to ensure a match.

**Does this mean no more meter readers?**

Yes. Drive-by meter readers will be eliminated and utilized for other critical purposes. City staff will continue to visit your property for routine service, maintenance, or repair. We will continue to respond to water emergencies.