

Spotsylvania County Water Meter Upgrade

Project Information Bulletin



The County of Spotsylvania is dedicated to providing you the most efficient and safest water service possible. Over the next 24 months, our partnered Installation Contractor will be installing automated smart meters throughout the County. With this new system, we will be able to provide you better visibility and tools to help you manage your water usage, identify potential leaks quicker and ultimately save money. We will use the same quality-assurance practices as always to ensure accuracy and performance of the new meters.

The key differences between our current metering system and our new advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) system are the following:

- Meter consumption data will be transmitted wirelessly from each meter to the utility office. County personnel will now only visit your water meter to investigate any system-triggered alerts or inquiries initiated by you.
- Automatic alerts will allow quicker response to leaks, meter tampering and unauthorized usage so that your property and your water bill are better protected.
- You will eventually have access to a customer portal that offers visibility and budgetary control over your water usage. You will be able to see your weekly or monthly consumption profile so that bills can be better understood, conservation practices can be reviewed and communication tools with the County can be implemented.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

There is nothing that you need to do, your new smart meter will be installed by an authorized contractor and the system will be checked to ensure that it is working properly. You will be alerted through various postings prior to the installation contractor reaching your neighborhood. The contractor will attempt to knock on your door to make sure it is okay to temporarily turn the water off in order to install the upgraded meter. If there is no response at the front door and the contractor detects water being used (by inspecting the meter register), then your meter will not be upgraded and you will have to call the utility office to schedule an appointment. When you first use your water after the upgrade, you may experience a "burp" of air and possibly some residue emitted at each faucet. If this happens, just run your water briefly until it flushes the line and flows normally.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **What is a smart meter?** A smart meter is part of a system that uses wireless radio frequency and cellular technology to send your meter readings to the County. All water meters are scheduled to be replaced with state-of-the-art meters by the end of 2020.
- **Why change the meters now?** The decision to implement the new system was driven by its ability to help the County's Water Department automate the collection of meter readings, provide customers with a better understanding of their water bills and identify leaks that are responsible for much of the system's treated water loss. Customers will have more control over their water bills and the County will be able to improve service and operate at a greater level of efficiency.
- **What are the benefits of the new meters and technology for the residents?** This technology offers more consistent and accurate readings and 24-hour leak detection. After installations are completed throughout the County, customers will have access to a web portal allowing customers to easily monitor their water consumption, compare current usage to previous



periods, set e-mail and text alerts and set budget and conservation goals.

- **Do I have to pay for installing my new meters?** No, The County pays for the costs of the meters and their installation.
- **Will my bill go up even if I'm using the same amount of water as before?** Whenever a new meter is installed, either a smart meter or a manual-read meter, there is a chance that your bill may increase. Many of the water meters in Spotsylvania County are more than 20-years old and at the end of their functional life. As meters age, their accuracy begins to decline. The new meter will accurately reflect your consumption, and as a result, may report higher billable water usage.
- **When will I receive my bill?** You will continue to receive your bill on the same cycle.
- **What makes "smart meters" different from the meters we currently have?** A smart meter measures how much water is used every hour instead of on a monthly basis. The readings allow the County to manage overall system demand and detect any problems, such as water leaks, very quickly.
- **What is the technology that reads my meter and sends it to the County? Is it safe?** Your new meters use wireless radio frequencies - just like wireless Internet and cable TV - to send and receive information from the County. The meters and communication network meet all federal safety standards and codes.

- **When will I know that my meter will be upgraded?**
We will be mailing out a postcard prior to the upgrade. We will also be hanging a door tag once the meter has been upgraded. During the installation, the authorized installation contractor will be wearing identification, and their vehicles will be marked with "Authorized Installation Contractor" magnets.

**WATER METER
UPGRADE**
Spotsylvania County
**Authorized
Installation Contractor**

Look for this postcard that will be mailed prior to your water meter being upgraded.

**IT'S TIME FOR AN UPGRADE...TO
ADVANCED METERING INFRASTRUCTURE!**

Starting in July, Spotsylvania Utilities will be upgrading all water meters.

How this benefits you:

- Early leak detection
- Personalized water budgeting
- Access to a customer portal to easily monitor water usage and sign up for alerts





Vehicles will be labeled during installation.




- Your water meter was upgraded today.
During your meter upgrade, water was temporarily disrupted. Flushing an outside faucet may be necessary to remove any residual air or discolored water.
- We were unable to upgrade your water meter because we detected water usage.

Please call our installation support helpline to schedule an appointment for your water meter upgrade: (912) 312-4422.

Spotsylvania County, along with its Installation Contractor, Ferguson Waterworks, would like to thank you for your support of our innovative, Advanced Metering System.



If for more information on the County's AMI smart meter project, see our web page at www.spotsylvania.va.us/smartmetering by scanning the QR code with your smart phone or contact Spotsylvania County Utilities at (540) 507-7300, Option 1.



Look for this door hanger when your water meter is upgraded.