

Dear MCWS Customers,

## **WE ARE EXCHANGING YOUR OLD WATER METER WITH A NEW SMART METER**

MCWS is committed to providing superior service to our customers. We'd like to tell you about an improvement project that will be coming to your area soon.

MCWS has partnered with Mueller Systems in order to upgrade its water system with the Mi.Net Mueller Infrastructure Network for Utilities--Mueller Systems' advanced two-way network. The Mi.Net System will automate the meter reading-to-billing process by linking its meters, distribution sites and control devices in a single data network.

The technology is designed to automate the collection of meter readings, provide customers with a better understanding of their water bills and help identify leaks that are responsible for property damage and the loss of water.

MCWS is installing this new infrastructure because the old meters are wearing out; many of them have been in use for over 20-years and may no longer be accurate. After installations are completed throughout the water system, the Water Authority will be able to improve customer service and operate your utilities at a greater level of efficiency.

To implement this improved service, Vanguard Utility Service will be in your community over the next few months installing water meters at our customers' homes and businesses. You cannot set an appointment. For the system to work properly, each meter's wireless communication system must be completely installed before moving to the next, thereby influencing the schedule. Severe weather may also impact the installation timeline.

### **Here's what you can expect:**

- Typically, installation will take place Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- Meter installers will have MCWS contractor logos on their trucks and wear brightly colored safety vests.
- You cannot make an appointment for installation. However, you do not need to be home during the installation, as long as we have safe and clear access to your meter – please remove any physical obstructions that may prevent a meter installation.
- In most cases the replacement will take less than 30 minutes
- You will experience a brief interruption in water services while your new meter is being installed. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

For more information on this project please visit or contact MCWS at (251)653-7346.

MCWS thanks you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Joe Summersgill  
General Manager  
MCWS  
(251)653-7346

**What is a smart meter?** A smart meter is a system that uses wireless and fiber optic technology to send your meter readings to the Water Authority. All water meters are scheduled to be replaced with state-of-the-art meters by the end of 2018.

**Why change the meters now?** The decision to implement the new system was driven by its ability to help the Water Authority automate the collection of meter readings, provide customers with a better understanding of their water bills, and identify leaks that are responsible for losing treated water. MCWS will be able to improve service and operate your utilities 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.

**Do I have to pay for installing my new meters?** MCWS pays for the costs of the meters and their installation.

**When will my new water meter be installed?** Installations will be completed gradually based on billing zones throughout 2017 and 2018.

**Can I get an exact date for my meter installation?** No. Crews will be in your area installing meters over the next few months. For the system to work properly, each neighborhood's meters and wireless communication system must be completely installed before moving on to the next, thereby influencing when other neighborhoods are scheduled. Severe weather may also impact the installation timeline.

**What do I have to do to be ready for my new meter installations?** Please make sure there is free and safe access to your existing meter, and that no obstructions are in the way.

**How long will I be without water during installation?** This will vary but the entire installation should take no more than 30 minutes.

**Will my bill go up even if I'm using the same amount of water as before?** Whenever a new meter is installed, either an automated water meter or a manual read water meter, there is a chance that your bill may increase. Many of the water meters on our system 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.

**When will I receive my bill?** You will continue to receive your bill on the same schedule.

**What makes "smart meters" different from the meters we have?** A smart meter measures how much water is used every hour instead of on a monthly basis. The readings allow MCWS to manage overall system use and detect any problems, such as water leaks, very quickly.

**What is the technology that reads my meter and sends it to the Water Authority? Is it safe?** Your new meters use wireless radio frequencies—just like wireless Internet and cable TV—to send and receive information from MCWS. The meters and communication system meet all federal safety standards and codes.

**Is my personal water use information confidential?** Yes. First, the only information communicated is your meter number and your water usage (the same information that was displayed on the old conventional meters at your premises). Second, your utility usage information will be safely transmitted over secure networks to and from MCWS. As is true now, your utility usage information will be protected and secure. MCWS must also comply with federal laws regarding the privacy, protection and disclosure of personal information.

**Didn't see an answer you were looking for?**

Please visit our website at [www.mocowater.org/newwatermeters](http://www.mocowater.org/newwatermeters) or contact MCWS at (251)653-7346.