

# Water Meter Replacement

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

#### **Why is Fox Chapel Authority (FCA) installing and upgrading water meters?**

Water meters across the FCA service area are approaching or beyond the manufacturer's recommended lifecycle of 20 years. In addition to replacing aging water meters, these new meters will allow the FCA to implement an automated meter reading process which will provide better customer service, greater data accuracy, and reduced operational costs.

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

The FCA will be replacing all residential water meters in the water system – nearly 5,500 – during this program.

#### **What if my meter had been replaced in the last couple of years?**

Even if your meter was replaced recently, and it was not an iPERL meter, you will need to have your meter replaced to provide the latest technology. The replacement process is the same as customers with an older meter.

#### **Where is my water meter?**

Most water meters are located inside the house or business in a basement, crawl space or utility closet, or outdoor in a meter pit.

#### **Will someone have to come into my house or business?**

Yes, a meter installer must enter your house or business and replace the meter if your meter is located inside your house. You will need to make an appointment for the meter replacement whether the meter is located inside or outside. (See Scheduling section).

#### **Am I required to participate?**

Yes, participation in this program is mandatory. All meters in FCA service area will be replaced over the course of 57 months. Your cooperation in scheduling an appointment after you receive a call is appreciated.

#### **Will I be charged for the installation?**

No. The meter installer will not be collecting any money.

### **How are the new meters different from what we have now?**

FCA has been utilizing meters manufactured by Sensus USA, Inc. for 40+ years, and has moved to the Sensus iPERL smart meter for water meter replacements. The iPERL meter utilizes magnetic flow technology to measure the flow of water rather than a mechanical meter with internal moving parts that can become worn over time.

### **What is a Smart Meter?**

With no moving part, lead-free iPERL water meters maintain their accuracy over a 20-year lifetime. The large easy to read display also includes battery life, empty pipe and forward/reverse flow indicators. The iPERL also provides built-in tamper protection. It can transmit meter reads securely either using current drive-by collection or by utilizing advance meter infrastructure where reads are sent directly to FCA,

### **Will anything be on the outside of my building?**

Only if communications signal strength is too weak to reach the meter inside your residence. There will be a box (also called transmitter) on the outside of your home (pictured at right). It will be in or around the same area that your current water meter transmitter is located. The installer will attempt to reuse the hardware that is currently on your home or business. In most cases though, the transmitter box is placed as high in the basement ceiling area as possible inside the home.



### **What is the process for replacement?**

Please read more about the process [here](#).

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **How does the system work?**

The water usage data from each meter will initially continue be transmitted wirelessly by a radio signal to an FCA drive-by vehicle. Transmitting encrypted data directly to FCA will be phased in over a period of years, once the Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI) is in place in each area.

### **How often will the new meter transmit my data?**

Where AMI is available, these new meters transmit an average of 4 times per day for less than a second each time, the rest of the time they are dormant and emit no radio frequency. This means the amount of radio frequency they emit is far less than most of the other day-to-day devices we use that utilize radio frequency to send a wireless signal.

If AMI is unavailable in your area, meter reading will continue to occur by drive-by vehicle to coincide with your route and billing period.

### **Is this new system safe?**

Yes, the power and duration of the radio signal is too low to pose a health risk. The products that make up the system are evaluated for safety and are below levels specified by the Federal Communications Commission.

### **Will deduct meters be impacted?**

Some customers use deduct meters to reduce their county and municipal sanitary sewer charges. This water is used primarily for irrigating lawns and landscape vegetation.



Customers with existing deduct meters can continue to use these if ICE appears on the meter register as shown above, or already have an iPERL. New deduct meters can be purchased from FCA at the prevailing cost.

### **Is my meter data secure?**

Yes, only meter consumption readings and meter identification numbers are transmitted. Personal customer information is not transmitted.

### **Does the meter interfere with other electronics?**

No, the technology operates as a very low-powered signal that is regulated by the FCC to eliminate interference. It will not interfere with the operation of other electronic services such as telephone, television, garage door openers, pacemakers, or baby monitors.

### **Does the AMI transmitter run on my home's electricity?**

No, AMI transmitters run on batteries with a 20- year lifespan.

## **SCHEDULING**

### **When will the meters be replaced or upgraded?**

Meters will be replaced between April 2023 and December of 2027 at no cost to you.

### **What if I am out of town for an extended period?**

If you plan on being away from your home for an extended period while your neighborhood is scheduled for meter replacement, call FCA at (412) 963-0212 to schedule an appointment before you leave.

**Do I have to be at my home or business during the appointment?**

Yes, if your meter is located inside, a person 18 years of age or older must be present throughout the entire appointment. If you have a meter pit you are not required to be at home but it is recommended.

**How long will the replacement take?**

Meter replacements typically take about 30 minutes.

**How should I prepare the area around my meter for the appointment?**

Please make sure that your water meter is easily accessible by removing any items that might be in the way. It is the property owners' responsibility to provide access to the meter.

**REPLACEMENT PROCESS****Who will be replacing my meter?**

An FCA service person will perform the meter replacement. Installers will have a marked vehicle, shirt with FCA logo, and an identification badge showing their affiliation with FCA. They will not ask for any personal information or for you to pay any money. If you have concerns whether someone is not acting in official capacity, please dial 911.

**Will I have to sign anything?**

The installer will record the new meter's serial number and final read of the old meter. You will not be required to sign anything.

**Will my water be turned off?**

Your water will be turned off for about 15 minutes while the installer is present.

**What if I need to reschedule my appointment?**

If you are unable to be present for your original appointment, you may reschedule. Please reschedule at least 24 hours before your original appointment. Contact FCA at (412) 963-0212 to reschedule an appointment.

**What if other components with my water system are not working?**

It is possible the installer may find another component is not working correctly. At that time, the installer will work directly with you to diagnose and provide guidance to address the problem.