



Advanced Metering Infrastructure 2019-2020 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is AMI?

Advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) is an integrated system of smart meters, communications networks, and data management systems that enables two-way communication between utilities and their metering equipment. AMI Meters transmits readings over a private, secure wireless network.

Is Advanced Metering new technology?

No. Approximately 50% of all meters in America are Advanced “Smart” meters. They have been around for more than 30 years.

How does Advanced Metering benefit me?

The new metering will allow the City of Converse to reduce the labor cost associated with reading the meters. The additional meter data will enable the City of Converse to better communicate with the customer regarding their water consumption patterns, detect abnormal consumption due to leaks, faucets running etc. and the City of Converse will be able to help the customer use water more efficiently.

Do AMI meters use radio frequency communications? Is it safe?

Yes. They do use a radio frequency to send data from the meter to the utility billing department. All communication equipment used for the AMI system complies with federal licensing requirements and is considered safe. According to the California Council on Science and Technology, when installed properly and maintained, they result in much smaller levels of radio frequency exposure than many existing common household electronic devices, like cell phones, microwave ovens and baby monitors. Radio Frequency (RF) fields from AMI meters have been studied and found to emit very low fields and then only intermittently. Any exposure to humans would be extremely small. There are no known adverse biological effects from these small fields. To provide some perspective, under typical operating conditions, an individual meter would transmit for approximately 45 minutes over a 20-year operating life. This should provide significantly less RF exposure than a single cellular phone call of the same length.

Why is the City of Converse installing new meters?

The water meters used in the City of Converse system need replacement. A decision to install smart meters instead of standard meters which required walking through yards is consistent with what most utilities in America are doing. AMI meters represent a significant improvement over previous metering technology. These AMI meters will allow the City of Converse Utilities to have better billing and consumption data.

When will the project begin and end?

The project is estimated to begin in October 2019 and will be completed by February of 2020. As new meters are changed out, the system will begin reading them using the two-way system.

Who will be doing the work associated with the meter change?

The City of Converse has contracted with HydroPro Solutions for materials and project management. Installation will be performed by M&E Construction who specializes in projects like this where there is a complete meter change out. All contracted employees will be in uniform and have marked vehicles.

Will you need to enter property?

Yes, but not your house. The water meter for your home or business will need to be replaced. These are most often found in the meter box located on your property.

Will I be notified prior to any meter installations at my home or business?

Yes. The installation company M&E or the City of Converse, will contact you prior to their arrival to change the water meter.

How long should the meter replacement take to complete at my home?

Water: The installation of a residential water meter typically takes 30 minutes. Larger commercial meters can take longer.

Will my service be interrupted during installations?

Yes, M&E and the City of Converse will make every effort to notify anyone at home during the installation that service will be interrupted.

Are you going to invoice me for the new meters?

No, we are not. The cost to replace meters is paid by the City of Converse.

How secure will the new meters be?

The meter display is visible for customers to be able to check their consumption, just like the old ones. All other information and data stored in the meter is secure and the meter is sealed. Data stored inside the meter is usage and location data only. No personal information (i.e. Customer's information) is stored inside of a meter.

Will a meter reader still need to visit to read the meter?

The City of Converse staff will not be on site to read meters monthly but will continue to need access to the meter for periodic safety and quality assurance testing as well as inspections and maintenance.

Will this affect meter reader jobs?

No, not for existing personnel. Our meter readers are being retrained to be meter technicians and will continue to be a vital part of our Customer Service & Billing Department. The AMI project has allowed the city to maintain existing staff levels even with the growth in meters over the last 5 years and will continue to help defer or delay the need to add staff.

Will I continue to be billed the same way?

The monthly utility bill will look the same. The consumption period will reflect the actual calendar month of the utility bill.

If I have questions about AMI, how do I get those answered?

Contact Utility Operations at 210-658-3453.