



---

## WATER METER PROGRAM

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### 1. Why do we pay for water?

It costs money to build and maintain the system of pipes that brings water to your home, the electricity to pump the water from underground and to your home, and to monitor and treat it to meet health requirements.

#### Water Meter Program

#### 2. What is the Water Meter Program?

Since 2015 the City has installed new water meters in most commercial and residential properties for both customers inside and outside the City boundaries. The objective of the water meter program is to provide new, efficient, and accurate meters with enhanced features such as leak detection, backflow monitoring and ability to read your meter remotely. Efficient water use is a long-term investment that produces excellent returns for our community. Metering water encourages us all to use our water efficiently and reflect on the value of water service. The more water you use, the more expensive water becomes.

#### 3. What are the benefits of the Water Meter Program to me?

- For most properties the City will be able to read the water meter without entering your property, ensuring your privacy.
- The new water meter system will increase the speed, efficiency and accuracy of meter readings.
- The new water meter will allow you to accurately monitor your water usage and detect any low-flow water leaks, reducing water waste. You can do this by reading your meter (see #9)

#### Water Meters

#### 4. What is a water meter?

A water meter is a device used to measure the volume of water being used at any given water connection. Typically, water meters are installed near the main water shut off valve in your home so they can measure the actual amount of water you use. Water

meters are a proven way to conserve water as residents are more aware of their consumption and pay for what they use.

**5. Who owns the meter?**

The City of Duncan owns each meter, but property owners are responsible for keeping them in good condition. Property owners/residents are not allowed to tamper with the meter.

**6. How is my meter read?**

The radio read system allows the meter to be turned on and read remotely so no one will need to visit your property. However, a small amount of meters do not have radio reading capabilities and will need to be read manually, meaning the Utilities Crew will need to visit your property to do so.

It is important to note that signal transmitted by the radio to collect the read is not sent continuously, it only wakes up and transmits signal when taking a read.

**7. What about the health concerns around WiFi to read the meter?**

The meter will include remote (wireless) communication that uses radio frequency technology so it can be read remotely for billing purposes. This is the same technology used in other household appliances such as cordless phones, TV, microwaves, garage doors, etc. Health Canada has determined that exposure to this level of radio frequency does not pose any health concerns.

**8. How do I know the meter reading is accurate?**

The water meters are factory tested and exceed the standards for accuracy set by the American Water Works Association.

**9. How do I read my water meter?**

If you wish to read the meter, open the lid on the pit installation and lift the small flap on top of the meter to obtain the read manually.

**Metered Water Rates**

**10. Why is the City of Duncan converting properties to metered water rates?**

The City is moving from a flat to a metered rate to:

- encourage water conservation
- improve leak detection
- improve consumption data
- reduce the amount of energy the utility uses to get your water to you

On flat rate billing you pay a fixed price for your water. It doesn't matter how much water you use your bill won't change.

**11. Will residents have a choice whether to be billed on the metered rate or the flat rate?**

No, every property with a meter will be invoiced based the metered rates as set out in the Fees & Charges Bylaw No.2090. For properties inside the City boundaries metered rates will be effective January 1, 2020 and in 2021 for properties outside the City boundaries. Properties that do not have a meter installed will continue to be billed on a flat rate until such time as a meter is installed.

**Proposed Metered Rate Design & Billing Periods**

**12. What will the impact of the metered rate be on my bill?**

The new rate structure will have a base charge for meter size to maintain, replace and read the meter. The consumption rate depends on how much water each residence consumes and will be billed on a per cubic meter basis. Residences that do not use a lot of water (average is 170 cubic meters) will likely see a small decrease in their utilities invoice.

**13. I live in a multi-family building. What will this mean for me?**

The base rate is established according to the size of the meter, and the consumption rate will be based on each cubic meter of water consumed. Each property will receive one invoice and it will be up to the property owner/Strata Council to distribute the cost between the units. If the property owner/Strata Council would like to meter each individual unit it will be up to them to have meters installed by a licenced plumber.

**14. If there is no one living at the residence for most of the year do I still have to pay for water?**

Yes. You will still need to pay for the base rate but there will be no consumption charge if the water is not being used and/or there is no leak.

**15. How often will my meters be read?**

The City is proposing to read the meters three times a year around end of April, end of August and end of December instead of the current two times a year. This is to allow the customer to see how much water they are using more often in order to be able to reduce their usage and save money.