



INFRAMARK

CUSTOMER FIRST NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2019

AMR WATER METERS

TYPES OF WATER METERS

Many of us have seen a person, whether from a utility district or city, walking along the street stopping at each house lifting the water meter cover and reading the meter.

Most utilities use a common type of meter known as a **Positive Displacement Meter (PD Meter)**. Unless retrofitted with proper equipment, meters must be read manually to produce a customer's bill. One of the challenges with a PD meter is identifying a leak. Typically, if a customer has a leak, they discover it in about 45 to 60 days when they receive their next water bill and find it much higher than anticipated due to the leak.

Automated Meter Reading (AMR) is the general term for a smart water meter. Smart meters can be read remotely and more frequently providing easier access to water consumption information for the customer and water utilities. Usually, smart meters do not require manual reading to produce a customer's bill. An AMR system can have the capability to send monthly, daily and in some cases every 15 minute readings. This data is sent through an interface with the district's billing system that produces customer's water bills. AMR systems can be walk-by, drive-by or a fixed network. With many smart meter applications, a customer can be made aware of a leak within 24 hours by receiving a leak alert and have it fixed quickly saving water and money. In the last 10 years, there has been an industry trend to replace traditional PD meters with smart water meters.

There is a newer version of the AMR reader called an AMA meter or **Advanced Metering Analytics**. AMA combines secure analytics-based software with a two-way fixed network to collect, organize and analyze meter data. It is a "smarter" meter than the traditional AMR reader. No infrastructure is required besides the meter and endpoint in the meter box because it uses a cell signal to transmit.

Another two-way communication system is an AMI meter or **Automated Meter Infrastructure**. It creates two-way communication over a fixed network between the utility system and the meter. For an AMI system, radio technology or fixed network infrastructure is required.

BENEFITS OF AN AMR

Water is money and any time there is a leak in the system, the customer and the utility are losing money.

Traditionally, finding system leaks has been a manual process. It is an inefficient and inexact science often relying on visual and auditory techniques. With an AMR system, each meter can be remotely monitored via the internet. This allows the utility and the customer to discover potential leaks before they become costly. They can help both the utility and the customer from having more unnecessary costs and contribute to water conservation.

INFRAMARK AND AMR

Currently, Inframark reads 181,749 meters per month. Of those meters, there are 156,408 traditional PD meters (86%); 21,159 AMA meters (12%); and 4,182 AMI meters (2%).

A question we often receive is "How do I know if I have an AMR?" Simply put, when an AMR meter is installed, a hole is drilled in the meter box lid that will hold the Endpoint (antenna) that connects to the meter. The Endpoint sends meter readings by cell signal for the last 24 hours, once a day. A customer web based portal is available enabling the customer to create their own login information and set up leak alerts. If the Endpoint is unable to communicate, the AMR meter holds information up to 120 days. The operator can pull a report, respond to the error message and correct the problem.

There have been advancements in technology regarding smart meters. There are smart meters that have no moving parts and have a warranted lifespan of 20 years as opposed to PD meters that have a lifespan of 10 years or 1,000,000 gallons.

AMR meters are the wave of the future. They help conserve water, save money and most importantly, allow users to be in control of their usage. They are an added layer in the customer service tool kit that helps customers understand their water usage patterns.

Should you want to learn more about smart meters and receive an estimate of the costs associated with an upgrade to your present District meters, please contact your Inframark Account Representative.

On behalf of the Texas MUD Leadership Team

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