

FAQs – Extended Answers

1. What is AMI?

The Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI) project is about improving how we collect information about water use by our customers. The project will replace the existing manual process of reading water meters with a network and meters that enable the City to collect water use automatically. Right now, the City reads meters once a month. This project will also enable the City to read meters daily, improving the quality of information about water use in the City.

2. Will my water bill increase?

You will not be charged for the new water meter, and your water rate will not change at the time of the upgrade. However, you may see a small increase in the amount of water used because the new water meters measure water usage more accurately than the old meters. As water meters age, they tend to wear out and may not measure all the water going through them. For this reason, it is necessary to periodically replace old water meters. So, depending on the age and accuracy of your current meter, you may see a small increase in your bill based on the more accurate measurement of the water being used.

3. What are the benefits of AMI?

AMI enhances operational control for the City by providing better data about the water distribution system, specifically where and when water is being used. AMI technology benefits the environment and community because remote technology will reduce the need for City of Norfolk staff to drive to locations to read meters and will conserve water through management of water use.

4. Is AMI safe?

Yes. AMI uses radio frequency like many commonly used devices such as baby monitors, walkie talkies, mobile phones, and AM/FM radios. Each AMI endpoint is only active for a few seconds per day, and endpoints will not be installed near people. The AMI operates well within the safety standards established by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) and many leading scientific and government agencies have deemed AMI to be safe, including the American Cancer Society, the National Cancer Institute, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and the California Council on Science & Technology.

5. Will my personal information be protected?

Yes. Meter information and usage data is encrypted using industry standard processes before being transmitted to the City. Personal, identifiable information, such as name, address, bill account number, or credit/collection information, is not transmitted to or from the meter. Each radio frequency device has a unique identification number, which is transmitted along with the meter reading. The unique number is compared to your account record electronically to ensure a match.

6. Will I be notified prior to any meter installations at my property?

Yes. The City of Norfolk and its contractor will contact you a month prior to notify you when the installation will occur. In addition, one week before the installation, an informational pamphlet will be hung on your front door. That pamphlet will provide detailed instructions about the installation process pending. On the day of the installation, our contractor will knock on your door to let you know they are beginning the work. They will also knock on your door once the work is complete to let you know they are done. It is not necessary, however, for you to be home during the installation. In that case, the contractor will leave a notice on your front door to let them know they were there and have installed your new meter.

7. Will I be notified prior to any meter installations at my business?

Yes. The City of Norfolk and its contractor will contact you to make an appointment approximately a month before we complete the work. We will also issue a reminder to you two business days before your scheduled appointment. On the day of installation, our contractor will knock on your door to let you know they are beginning the work. They will also knock on your door once the work is complete. However, it is not necessary for you to be there during the installation. In that case, the contractor will leave a notice on your front door to let you know they were there and performed the work.

8. When will this start?

The City of Norfolk AMI project is currently in the planning and evaluation phase. In Fall 2025, we will begin working with AMI installation contractors to determine next steps. Please visit the webpage at <https://www.norfolk.gov/Advanced-Meters> to stay updated about the project and look for future communications as the project continues.

9. Will water service be disrupted during installation?

Two types of general installations will occur. In the first type, known as a retrofit, our contractor's work will add a device that enables your existing meter to communicate electronically. In this case, there will be no disruption to your service. The second type is known as a replacement. In that case, there will be a short interruption in service (approximately 30 minutes). You will also be instructed on how to flush your water lines after the service is complete.