

Frequently Asked Questions About the Automated Meter Reading Project

Q - Do I need to be home for this appointment?

A – Yes, or someone 18 or over. We can not enter anyone's home without someone being present.

Q – What will this cost?

A – Nothing. This project is being paid for by the City of Duluth, Public Works and Utilities Department.

Q – Will the installer have proper ID? How do I know they work for one of the AMR Project contractors SL-serco, A. G. O'Brien, or A. W. Kuettel & Sons?

A – Yes, the installers will have company apparel that clearly indicates they work for one of the AMR Project contractors: SL-Serco, A. G. O'Brien, or A.W. Kuettel & Sons and they will have an ID badge. (Describe the badge to the resident if you feel they need more information) If you are unsure about the installer's identity, we encourage you to call us at 218-730-4110, the Duluth Public Works & Utilities Department at 218-730-4050 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays, or the Duluth Police Department's non-emergency number at 218-730-5400 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you call before 8:00 a.m., or after 4:00 p.m., or on weekends, you may call SL-serco directly at 218-730-4110. A recorded message will guide you through their voice mail system and a message must be left for the on-call staff member who will return your call within a short period of time.

Q- Is SL-serco scheduling all appointments?

A- No. SL-serco is scheduling appointments for the water and gas upgrades only. If we show that your gas or water meter are due to be changed out, you will need to contact A. G. O'Brien at 218-349-2872 for water change outs or please contact A.W. Kuettel at 218-341-0991 for full gas change outs. If you have a water upgrade and a full gas change out however, SL-serco will notify A.W. Kuettel of this time and they will call you.

Q – Doesn't the upgrade work require a licensed plumber?

A – No, the work we are doing is 'retrofitting' or upgrading the water and gas systems which does not require us to shut off water or gas services. The installer will be putting a new 'head' on the water meter along with a radio device. The gas retrofitting is adding a radio device to the gas meter.

A2- Where a full water meter or gas meter change out is needed a licensed plumber and gas technician will be changing out the meters. The two firms responsible for these change outs are A.G. O'Brien and A.W. Kuettel.

Q – How long will the upgrade take?

A – Once the installer arrives in the morning, afternoon or evening, it should take no more than 20 minutes to complete the work unless a full water or gas exchange is taking place. In instances where a full exchange is taking place the time may vary and the installer will let you know the

expected time.

Q – When are appointments normally scheduled?

A – Appointments are scheduled for the morning, afternoon, or evening.

Q – Do you make appointments outside of regular business hours?

A – Yes, appointments for upgrades can be scheduled evenings and on Saturday.

Q – Will my water and gas service be interrupted for this appointment?

A – Most customers will not have service interrupted. A small number of homes will require a full installation of a new water and/or gas meter, handled by local contractors A.G. O'Brien or A.W. Kuettel. There will be brief service interruptions for those homes during installation.

Q – Isn't my water meter on the outside of the home?

A – No, water meters are located within the homes to prevent freezing in the winter months. Some homes may be equipped with an outdoor 'reader'. Most gas meters however, are located outside the homes and will not require a special appointment time. However, there are a few homes that have a full water and gas change out, you will need to be present for these exchanges to take place.

Q – Is this something I have to do?

A – Yes, this is a mandatory meter upgrade. The city of Duluth requires that all utility customers participate in the program. Failure to do so may result in utilities being shut off.

Q – My meter has received the AMR technology upgrade. Why is a meter reader still taking readings from my meter?

A— If your meter has been upgraded with the AMR technology and your meter is still being read manually it just indicates that we have not completed commissioning the system in your area, and are not yet ready to read your meter electronically. Once we are receiving readings from your meter future readings will be taken electronically.

Q – Why do I need a new meter?

A – In most instances, the meter was scheduled for replacement, and is part of the AMR project for the entire city of Duluth.

Q – How do you know that my reading is accurate?

A –This "state-of-the-art" meter reading technology uses electronic registers to collect the meter readings and a radio to send the data that have proven to be more accurate than visually reading the meter. Also, each radio frequency device has a unique identification number that is transmitted along with the meter reading. The unique identification number is compared electronically to your account record to ensure that the meter reading received matches the meter assigned to your account.

Q –Why is the City Utility hiring contractors to do the upgrade work?

A – The City has contracted for assistance to complete the conversion of over 58,000 meters in a timely fashion.

Q –What if we have a leak after the meter is installed?

A –Since your water meter will not be changed, only a radio device installed upon it, installation-related leaks are extremely rare. SL-serco will make every effort to dispatch service personnel as quickly as possible to determine the cause of the leak and to take appropriate action. If you discover an installation-related leak, please contact us at 218-730-4110. If you are calling outside of normal business hours, and receive a recording, follow the instructions for leaving a message for their on-call staff member and your call will be returned within a short period of time.

If your water meter was replaced contact A. G. O’Brien at 218-349-2872.

If your gas meter was replaced and you suspect there is a leak call Duluth Public Works and Utilities at 218-730-4100. This emergency response line is operational seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

For questions about your full gas change out please contact A.W. Kuettel at 218-341-0991.

Q –Are there any hazards that could result from having the radio transmitter in my home or business?

A –No, this type of equipment is regulated by the FCC and transmits with extremely low power (less than 1/100th of a watt). Each radio transmission lasts only a fraction of a second.

Q –Will the radio transmitter interfere with my television, cordless phone, garage doors or pacemaker?

A –No, the radio transmissions occur on a frequency different from those used by television signals, cordless phones, garage doors, and pacemakers. In addition, the transmissions last less than one second.

Q- Is this radio device a listening device used to listen to conversations in my basement or utility room?

A- NO. This is a device programmed only to transmit water or gas usage.

Q –What powers the AMR radio transmitter?

A –The radio is a battery-powered device. The expected life of the battery is 20 years, which coincides with the expected life of a residential water meter.

Q –Who should I call for more information about the AMR Project?

A –You may call the Duluth Public Works and Utility Department at 218-730-4050 or visit their web site at www.comfortsystems.ws.