



MOUNT PROSPECT “EASY READ”

Village Wide Installation of Automated Meter Reading System

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is Easy Read?

Easy Read is the Village of Mount Prospect’s new project to install automated meter reading (AMR) technology in homes and businesses throughout the Village (does not include Illinois American service area). We will upgrade water meters with state-of-art equipment that will allow the Village to obtain meter readings without entering your property or having the resident submit a monthly read. Mount Prospect’s Easy Read project delivers better customer service by providing accurate bills based on actual consumption, eliminating the need for residents to read their meter, and overall improved efficiency.

How does AMR work?

Every upgraded water meter is connected to a small battery-powered device (endpoint) that is installed close the meter usually in the basement or craw space. The Endpoint will read the meter several times each day and send a brief, low-powered radio signal to a nearby Collector. Collectors then transmit all meter reads to the Village eliminating the need for manual meter readings.

Specifically the Village is using the Badger ORION SE fixed network system, using a wireless fixed network system that has three components:

- End Point: This unit is connected to the water meter and “reads” the meter every hour. Every six hours, the end point sends its information to the Data Collector.
- Data Collector: A total of 19 data collectors are located throughout the Village on Village buildings, street lights, and water facilities. The Data Collector transmits the meter readings to the Village’s water meter reading computer.
- Automatic Meter Infrastructure Control Computer: The Mount Prospect billing software will use this information to calculate the amount of water used and create bills.

Are there any potential health concerns with radio signals?

No. The power and duration of the radio signal is too low to pose a health risk. The products that make up the Easy Read system are stringently evaluated for safety and meet all standards

established by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Industry Canada(IC), and Institute of Electrical (IEEE) and Electronics Engineers.

How will AMR benefit me?

By ensuring that your bill is based on actual usage, AMR technology minimizes billing based on estimated reads. In addition, AMR improves accuracy, eliminating the potential for human error in manual meter reading and can help to identify any irregularities in water usage such as leaks.

How are meter reads currently obtained?

Residential properties are required to read their own meter on a monthly basis and submit the read to the Finance Department via email, phone or submitted with the water bill.

Commercial properties currently have an automated meter reading system known as Trace installed. Trace was installed in the early 1990s utilizing end points that are similar to the end points that will be installed with the new read system. The Trace system required a meter reader to drive-by each commercial property and interrogate each meter with a hand-held device. The Trace system is no longer being supported and has reached the end of its useful life.

Is my account information secure?

Yes, only meter consumption readings and meter identification numbers are transmitted. Personal customer information is not loaded in the Endpoint or data collector and will not be transmitted.

How will I know that you have my meter reading and not someone else's?

The Endpoint that sends your meter reading has a unique identifier that is transmitted along with the read data. This identifier is compared electronically to your account record to ensure that the meter reading matches the meter assigned to your account.

Will the radio transmitter interfere with my television, computer, cordless phone, garage door, pacemaker or other electronic devices?

No. The technology operates as a very low-powered signal that is regulated by the (FCC) against interference. It is unlikely that it will interfere with the operation of other electronic devices.

Does the AMR transmitter run on my home's electricity?

No, AMR transmitters run on batteries with a 20 year lifespan.

Will there be any difference in the delivery or quality of water after my meter upgrade?

No. You will continue to enjoy the same high-quality water you have come to expect from Mount Prospect.

Am I required to participate in the Easy Read project and have my meter upgraded?

Yes. Participation in the Easy Read project is mandatory. Meters for all customers, residential and business, will either be replaced or modified. Your cooperation in making an appointment when notified is appreciated.

BILLING QUESTIONS

How will AMR technology impact my water bill? Will my bill go up?

As water meters age, they run slower and under-register water usage. AMR technology ensures that customers pay only for the water they use – no more and no less. Some customers may see an increase in their water bill. This is because the new meter is measuring water usage accurately.

Easy Read minimizes billing based on estimated reads and ensures that your bill is based on actual usage. In addition, AMR technology improves accuracy, eliminating the potential for human error in manual meter reading and can help to identify any irregularities in water usage, such as leaks, before the problem shows up on your bill.

How much will this upgrade cost me?

There is NO COST to residents or commercial properties for the Easy Read meter upgrade.

What if I have questions about the last meter read before my upgrade?

Digital photographs will be taken of the last meter reading, should any questions arise. The installer will provide these photographs to the Village and our staff will have this information available to answer your questions.

INSTALLATION QUESTIONS

When will Easy Read come to my home or business?

You will be notified by mail when installers are scheduled to be in your neighborhood and when you should call to schedule an appointment. Please do not call until you have received notification.

How will I be notified when AMR is to be installed at my home?

Approximately four weeks before Easy Read installations begin in your area, you will receive notification by mail. Approximately two weeks later, you will receive a letter providing you with specific information about scheduling appointments. If the installers are working in your neighborhood, and you have not called to schedule an appointment, they may come to your home asking to upgrade your meter that day. You are not obligated to let the installer in without an appointment.

How is the installation done?

The Easy Read installer will locate your water meter (often in the basement of your home or business). Most residents will receive a new register (component of the meter that displays the read) head while some residents will receive a new meter. For residential customers, replacing the meter will require installers to turn off the water briefly. This allows installers to remove the old meter and install a new one. Water service may be interrupted for commercial customers as well.

When the meter is installed, the Easy Read installer will test the meter to ensure that it is operational. The installer will also install the Endpoint (radio transmitter) near the meter usually

in the floor joists of the basement or craw space. The Endpoint will be wired to the water meter. The installer will then program the Endpoint using a handheld computer to allow communication between the Endpoint and your water meter. The job is complete when the installer has removed his/her equipment and any debris.

Our Easy Read team will perform quality checks. You may be among the customers contacted to allow this second visit. Your cooperation in this effort is appreciated.

How long will it take?

Residential installation should take less than a half-hour, in most instances. Some installations may take longer. An adult resident of at least 18 years of age must be present.

Commercial installations should take about 30 minutes, but depending on the location of the meter and meter size installations could take several hours. An adult resident of at least 18 years of age must be present.

Who will perform the installation?

The Village has contracted Professional Meters, Inc. (PMI) to perform the installation. A representative from PMI will arrive at your home at the scheduled appointment time in truck or van marked with the PMI logo. The PMI representative will be wearing a shirt or jacket with the PMI logo and will be carrying a PMI identification badge. Do not hesitate to contact PMI or the Village to confirm the installer's identity.

Will my water service be interrupted during the installation?

In many cases, water service will be turned off for 15-20 minutes. The installer will make certain that service is restored before leaving your home. Typically, if there is a functioning by-pass, water service will not be interrupted for commercial customers.

What if my meter is not accessible (behind a wall, obstructed by personal property, etc.)?

The water meter must be accessible as required by Village code 9.409. If the installer determines that the water meter is not accessible at the time of installation a new appointment will need to be scheduled and the meter must be made accessible prior to the next appointment. Any costs associated with making the water meter accessible are the responsibility of the resident.

Please visit the Village's Easy Read website www.mountprospect.org/EasyRead for more information on this exciting new program.

If you have any questions, please contact the Mount Prospect Public Works Department at 847.870.5640 or publicworksdept@mountprospect.org