



Bedford

MASSACHUSETTS

METER REPLACEMENT PROJECT – Town of Bedford

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



MAY 2, 2019
TOWN OF BEDFORD
314 Great Road, Bedford MA-01730

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TOWN OF BEDFORD

WATER METER REPLACEMENT AND SUMP PUMP SURVEY

The Town of Bedford has initiated a comprehensive water meter replacement program to:

- Improve the efficiency of water meter reading and utility billing
- Eliminate the need for estimated bills
- Provide instantaneous flow information for customers to check for potential leaks
- Investigate sources of extraneous flow to the Town's sewer system

WHAT IS THE METER REPLACEMENT PROJECT?

This town wide project will replace old meters with new, industry tested water meters that will allow the Town of Bedford to obtain meter readings without coming into or walking around your property. DPW staff with handheld receivers will capture meter information as they pass through your neighborhood. In addition, the new software will provide users with water consumption history and possible leak detection information.

WHO WILL BE REPLACING THE METERS?

The Town has contracted with Mass Installation, Inc. a private contractor who will perform most of the meter replacements and sump pump investigations. Mass Installation, Inc., MII, has worked in several other communities in the area and is committed to completing this project with the minimum amount of inconvenience to Bedford customers.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF NEW METERS?

There are several benefits of the new meters, including:

Low-flow reading technology will detect possible leaks in your plumbing. For example, leaks can occur in toilets or outside faucets without your knowledge resulting in high water bills for unnecessary usage. ([Click here to refer to the meter reading guide](#), also printed below).

Daily Usage View – Property owners will eventually be able to use an online portal to view their daily water usage. Customers will use their Account number in a secure website, and be able to monitor daily water usage and set up alerts for excess usage.

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HOW IS THIS PROJECT FUNDED?

The Water Meter Replacement Project is being funded through the Town's Capital Improvement Program with partial funding from the MWRA. The meters will be replaced in existing properties at no additional cost to the owner.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE METER REPLACEMENT PROCEDURE?

Mass Installation, Inc. and the Town intend to roll out this project in six phases, correlating with the six billing cycles. MII will notify residents in each cycle via a mailed post card. Once you receive this card, please follow the instructions to schedule an appointment with MII as soon as possible.

Appointments will be available Tuesdays through Saturdays. You may schedule appointments at any time through their Toll-Free number.

Please do NOT call to schedule an appointment unless you have received the notification to do so.

MII representatives should arrive within their scheduled appointment period, unless they are running late and they will notify you accordingly. All MII employees have a company-marked vehicle and uniform and will have official Mass Installation Inc. identification. Do not let anyone into your property without proper identification. If you have already received the meter change out notification and if the MII representatives are in the neighborhood, they may approach you for your availability. Please verify identification before allowing anyone into your property.

Typically, the meter change out is a simple procedure that should take no more than 30 - 45 minutes. The MII installer will remove the old meter, install the new meter and test the meter signal with a handheld receiver. If the set-up is such that the signal cannot be read from the street, MII will install an additional radio transmitter on the outside of the house to boost the signal.

On rare occasions, your water main shut off valves may need replacement in order for the meter to be changed. If needed for a proper shut down, MII will replace the shut off valves at the meter. Any plumbing repairs other than at the meter are the responsibility of the property owner. In the event that the plumbing is in disrepair such that the contractor is not able to replace the meter, MII will notify the property owner, who must then contact a licensed plumber. Once the repairs are completed, you will need to reschedule the meter replacement appointment with MII.

MII personnel will record the reading on the existing meter, photograph the old and new meters, and restore the work area to the original condition.

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The property owner will be provided information on the status of the visit and a pamphlet for “How to read your new meter” and information on proper installation of sump pumps.

Please be advised that there may be some trapped air or slight discoloration in the water line as a result of turning the water off and on. This should clear up after running your cold water tap for a few minutes. You may hear some noise as the air exits spigots and fixtures. This is normal. If the problem persists, please contact the Bedford Water Division at (781) 275-7605.

WHERE IS MY WATER METER?

Your water meter is most likely located in your basement or crawl space, usually along the front wall where your water service (pipe) enters your property from the street. Please ensure that the path to the meter is clear for the installer.

WHAT ELSE DOES THE CONTRACTOR DO DURING THE VISIT?

MII personnel will also check your basement or lowest level for any sump pumps. If your property has a sump pump the contractor will be inspecting the pump discharge to ensure that it is not connected to the Town’s sewer system. As an MWRA community, the Town of Bedford is required to locate any excess volume of water in our collection system that does not need to be treated at Deer Island. Stormwater that is pumped into the sewer system directly increases the Town’s sewer rates to each customer. Removing any illegal connections reduces potential overflows and sewer backups.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STORM WATER AND SEWER?

Sewer or wastewater is water that is discharged from bathrooms, sinks, kitchens and other plumbing components. This water is carried through the Town’s sewer system to the MWRA to be treated at Deer Island and eventually discharged to Boston Harbor. In Bedford, this water runs through at least one sewer pumping station. These stations can become surcharged due to extraneous water from sump pumps, resulting in sewer backups into private properties.

Stormwater is water from rain or precipitation that typically drains into catch basins along the street where it flows into streams and rivers. Rain gutters from your homes and sump pumps from basements should not carry ground water or stormwater to the sewer system.

DO I NEED TO DO ANYTHING TO PREPARE FOR THE INSTALLATION?

Before you make your appointment, please check that your meter is accessible. When the MII representative arrives, feel free to ask for proper identification before you show the installer where your meter is located.

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Please keep the meter area clear for the installer and ensure that pets are secured during the installation appointment.

Someone over the age of 18 must be present to allow the MII installer access to the existing meter.

If your property is a rental property, it is imperative to ensure that the tenant is aware of the appointment and follows these guidelines.

DO I ALREADY HAVE A NEW METER?

If you had your meter replaced within the last 3 years you may not need a new meter. If you are unsure, please contact the Bedford Water Division at (781) 275-7605, ext. 4259.— MII will still need an appointment to verify proper sump pump installation and to test the existing water meter.

WILL YOU BE REPLACING MY SECOND METER (IRRIGATION METER)?

Yes, if your irrigation meter is not in compliance with our new automated billing system, MII will replace your irrigation or second meter as well. When you schedule your meter replacement appointment, please notify MII that you have a second meter or irrigation meter so they can allot additional time.

WHAT IF THERE IS A LEAK AT THE METER, OR ANOTHER PROBLEM AFTER THE METER HAS BEEN REPLACED?

To report a leak at or near the meter after the new meter has been installed, please contact MII at their Toll-Free number as soon as possible for a timely response to the issue. If the leak is substantial, or if it is after office hours please call the Bedford Police Department at 781-275-1212 immediately and they will contact the Bedford Water Division.

HOW DOES THE METER READING SYSTEM WORK?

The system works via wireless signals sent from a small radio unit connected to the water meter. The radio unit sends the meter reading to a mobile collector unit used by the Department of Public Works Water Division as they drive through the area.

The new meters will not affect your health or your privacy. The wireless portions of the system operate according to Federal Communications Commission rules, and will not interfere with other radio frequencies in the area.

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The only information transmitted from this equipment is the water meter reading.

Each radio frequency device has a unique identification number which is transmitted with the meter reading. The unique identification number is compared to your account record to ensure that there is a match.

WILL THE RADIO TRANSMITTER INTERFERE WITH MY TELEVISION, CORDLESS PHONE, GARAGE DOORS OR PACEMAKER?

No, the radio transmissions occur on a frequency different from those used by television signals, cordless phones, garage doors and pacemakers. This transmission is regulated by the FCC. The radio signal is only active when the meter reading takes place. This is less than a few seconds per billing cycle.

WHAT HAPPENS WITH THE CURRENT METERS AND EQUIPMENT?

The existing meters will be recycled. As is currently the case, the new water meters are the property of the Bedford Water division and the Town will continue to perform any unexpected maintenance on these units in the future. We anticipate these new meters to be in operation for at least 20 years.

WHAT IF I DO NOT WANT MY METER REPLACED?

This is a Town-wide mandatory program. The Bedford Water Division has the right and responsibility to access all premises for water meter work. Failure to schedule your appointment may result in your water service being shut off until such time that the meter is replaced.

WILL THE TIMING OF MY WATER BILLS CHANGE?

There will be no change to your semi-annual billing period; however, this new system presents the Town with the opportunity to provide quarterly bills in the future.

HOW CAN I TRACK MY WATER USAGE AFTER THE NEW METER IS INSTALLED?

There are multiple ways to review your water usage.

After the new meter is installed, you can use the meter reading guidelines below to track usage and verify any water leaks.

Residents would be able to login to an online portal using their unique account number to view their water usage.

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HOW DO I KNOW IF HIGHER USAGE MAY BE A RESULT OF A LEAK IN MY PLUMBING SYSTEM?

The new, more accurate meter has the ability to detect small leaks that the older meter missed, including continuous flow recordings when water usage is typically not expected such as during your work day or in the middle of the night.

HOW DO I CHECK FOR LEAKS?

If the leak indicator is visible on the new meter refer to the “How to read my meter pamphlet” below.

1. Check your indoor and outdoor faucets for small drips.
2. To check your toilet tank for leaks, place a few drops of food coloring in the toilet tank. If the water in the bowl changes to the color of dye used in the tank, you have a leak. Seek assistance from a licensed plumber to fix all leaks since even small leaks can cost a significant amount.

Please be reminded that you are responsible for all water that passes through the meter so careful monitoring of water usage and benefitting from the functionality of the new meter is critical to minimizing your utility expenses.

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ARD® UTILITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS™



How to Read the Neptune E-Coder® Register

To read your Neptune E-Coder® register, expose the solar panel to sunlight or shine a bright light (i.e. flashlight or cell phone flashlight), and the display will activate.

When activated, the LCD display will first show a segment test:



This screen will be followed by the display of the E-Coder's manufacturing configuration, followed by two (2) reading screens:

Reading - Shows the current read with comma separators and decimal place, after initial activation this screen displays for 20 seconds before toggling to Rate Screen. Each additional Read Screen displays for 8 seconds. The below image shows a reading value of 3,179.210 (three thousand, one hundred, seventy-nine, two tenths, one hundredth) Cubic Feet.



Flow Rate - When the screen toggles, the rate of flow is visible and is shown in gallons per minute for four seconds. Then it toggles back to the read screen. The image below shows a flow rate of 50.7 (fifty) gpm.



	<p>FLOW INDICATOR Shows the direction of flow through the meter.</p> <p>ON Water in use. OFF Water not in use. Flushing Water is running slowly. - - Reverse flow. - Forward flow.</p>
	<p>LEAK INDICATOR Displays a possible leak.</p> <p>OFF No leak indicated. Flushing Intermittent leak indicates that water has been used for at least 50 of the 96 15-minute intervals during the previous 24-hour period. On Continuously Indicates water use for all 96 15-minute intervals during the previous 24-hour period.</p>
<p>RATE</p>	<p>RATE OF FLOW Average flow rate is displayed every twelve (12) seconds on LCD display.</p>
	<p>LCD DISPLAY Nine-digit LCD displays the meter reading in billing units of measure: U.S. gallons, cubic feet, Imperial gallons, or cubic meters.</p> <p>1 - E-Coder Basic Reading/Customary 8-digit remote reading. 2 - Customary reverse head digits. 3 - E-CoderPLUS Reading (8-digit remote reading).</p>



36 Hudson Rd
Sudbury MA 01776



800-225-4616
www.tisales.com

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IS THERE ANYTHING HAZARDOUS INSIDE THE EQUIPMENT?

No, only ordinary electronics and batteries are inside the equipment. The batteries have a 20 year expected life.

IS THERE ANY SPECIAL CARE OR MAINTENANCE THAT I NEED TO DO TO MY NEW METER?

No, your meter does not require any maintenance by the property owner.

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