

Advanced Metering Infrastructure Program

The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) selected Sensus USA Inc. (Sensus) to provide state of the art Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) technology throughout the City of Pittsburgh. The innovative AMI system will greatly enhance monthly automated meter reads with a wireless system that collects multiple remote reads per day, allowing for better leak detection, increased billing features and improved customer service.

Sensus is a global leader in utility infrastructure systems and supports PWSA's commitment to maintaining a high quality of life for our citizens through cost effective innovative programs. The system wide upgrade will begin in April 2014 and will last through the end of summer. PWSA will continue to keep all customers informed about this project and when you should expect to see an installer in your area.

What is a meter reading device?



The meter reading device is a gray or beige box located on the outside of your home or business. The device is also known as Automated Meter Readers (AMR). This device will retrieve and send consumption data directly from your meter throughout the day.

How does this project benefit the customer?

The current meter reading device attached to your home or business has reached its useful life cycle. The new advanced meter reading device will ensure continuous billing accuracy, provide leak detection services and help customers learn about conservation strategies. Most importantly, this project includes a web based reporting system that will allow customers access to their daily consumption data to check usage and set alerts for high consumption. Customers will be able to manage their consumption data and receive alerts anywhere in the world.

Will replacing the meter reading device cost me anything?

The meter reading device will be installed free of charge. There is no capital investment to complete this project. In fact, PWSA will pay nearly 10% less per month for such services. PWSA is delighted to upgrade our meter reading technology while keeping cost down.

Some meter reading device installations may require the replacement of the meter. Meter charges may apply in accordance with the Rules and Regulations established by the Board of Directors. Some customers may incur a charge for the replacement of a meter if there is evidence of intentional damage or negligence to the meter.



Will I need to provide access to my meter?

No. The replacement of your meter reading device can be done from the outside of your home or business. The installer will replace the grey or beige meter reading device that is currently on your home or business. If access to your meter is required the installer will communicate this information back to Customer Service. PWSA Customer Service will then send a letter regarding the need to schedule an appointment to gain access to your meter.

Will my water service be interrupted?

No. The installer should only take on average 30 minutes to replace the meter reading device from the outside. There is no need to interrupt your service during this time.

What if I have a gated yard?

The installer will need access inside gated areas to the meter reading device location. For the safety of the installer, all pets must be kept inside or away from the work area.

Will I be notified in advance when installers will be in my neighborhood?

Yes. Customer Service will make phone calls to customers weekly to all valid telephone numbers on file. To ensure you receive updates and future notices from PWSA, please make sure we have your current contact information by visiting the PWSA website at www.pgh2o.com and selecting the "Update Contact Info" tab.

What should I do if I have a complaint or concern regarding the installation?

Please call us immediately at to speak with an agent at 412-255-2423.
(Select menu option #5 for Customer Service, then menu option #2 for the AMI program)

Will wireless technology affect my health or privacy?

The new meters will not negatively affect health or privacy. In fact, overall health will be improved and privacy enhanced by replacing vehicles and manual visits to your home with environmentally clean radio communication. The wireless portions of the system will be operated according to Federal Communications Commission rules, and will not interfere with other radio frequencies in the area. The transmitters use one-quarter of the power of a cellphone. The amount of exposure to radio waves decreases with the square of the distance from the source. Exposure to radio waves from smart meters is absolutely tiny compared to cellphones. In addition, transmission time for the units we are installing totals 15 seconds per day.



Radio frequency is all around us. Radio stations, cell phones, cordless phones, wireless internet, baby monitors, garage door openers, remote car starters and television remotes all use radio frequency to transmit signals. These new meters transmit an average of 4 times per day for less than a second each time, the rest of the time they are dormant and emit no radio frequency. This means the amount of radio frequency they emit is far less than most of the other day-to-day devices we use that utilize radio frequency to send a wireless signals.

Can you explain more about this project?

The project includes replacing about 78,000 residential and commercial meter reading devices with new technologically advanced meter reading devices that can better communicate usage data via wireless technology directly to PWSA.

All meters in PWSA's water utility service area, including domestic water, irrigation and reclaimed water, will be read using the advanced metering reading system.

During the first phase of the project, PWSA's project team and Utility Metering Solutions (UMS) physically conducted a visual inspection of a sample of residential and nonresidential meters throughout the City to help determine specifications for the new system. Customers experienced no interruptions to their water service during the inspection.

PWSA's authorized contractors and consultants are committed to minimizing impacts from this important project. PWSA's authorized contractor, UMS, will prepare and work according to reliable, updated schedules that will not inconvenience you.

To ensure that the installation is complete, workers will briefly test the new meter reading device before they leave property.

Who is doing the work?

The project is being managed by The Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA) and Sensus USA Inc. (Sensus). PWSA will be responsible for the day-to-day execution of the project, including recommending equipment and materials, selecting vendors and contractors, overseeing installation, and ensuring the highest level of customer satisfaction.

PWSA and Sensus managed the first phase of the project, which included evaluating and recommending equipment and systems as well as developing performance measures for the project's implementation phase.

Utility Meter Solutions (UMS) will be the day-to-day installers in the area. They will carry proper identification and have successfully completed a background check. They will not need to enter your property, nor will they be asking for any form of payment from customers.



How does the system work?

The system works via wireless signals sent from a small radio unit inside the meter box that is connected to the water meter. The meter radio unit sends readings to regional collector units that then transmit the meter reading data to receivers installed on PWSA's infrastructure.

There are seven communication towers throughout the PWSA service area. At an average of four intervals per day meters will send consumption information to the closest available tower. Regional collectors will be located on existing water tanks located throughout PWSA's service area. Each radio unit will send a 111-millisecond usage report from the meter to PWSA four times a day.

What happens with the current meters and equipment?

The existing meter reading devices being replaced during the project will be properly disposed.

As is currently the case, water meters, and meter reading devices will remain the property of PWSA and PWSA will continue to perform the required maintenance on these units as needed.

Where can I get more information?

Contact a representative Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:30 pm at 412-255-2423.
(Select menu option #5 for Customer Service, then menu option #2 for the AMI program)