

City of Durango

Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)

Implementation Frequently Asked Questions

2018-2019



The City of Durango has partnered with Zenner USA and Vanguard Utility Service to install new Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) throughout the City of Durango.

Starting in November 2018, Vanguard Utility Service will have trained technicians installing new water meters and associated radios throughout the City. This upgrade is required to ensure continued accuracy and life of the water meters within Durango. It will also improve operational efficiency, allow for leak detection, and improve the City's ability to provide customer service within our system. This meter changeout is necessary and **mandatory**, and will require the cooperation of all the City's water customers.

Below are a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the AMI Project.

- **What is Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)?**

- An AMI system refers to a system of both hardware and software for measurement and collection of data. The system starts with a meter which measures use and transfers that data through a radio in regular intervals. The system allows for centralized data collection but continues to allow for mobile (vehicle) or hand (walk by) readings. This allows for more frequent collection of data and data analysis, and is a two-way system that can be updated centrally or at the location of the meter.



- **How does the technology work?**

- The Zenner technology starts with the water meter and register which tracks the gallons of water consumed for each account. Each register is connected to a Meter Interface Unit (MIU) which collects the data from the register and communicates it across the 900 MHz radio frequency to other MIUs. Together, the MIUs work as a mesh network, providing the data to radio repeaters, and ultimately to a network collector which allows the data to be retrieved by City staff.

- **Why is the City of Durango installing AMI?**

- Durango has utilized various metering and meter reading systems in the past, and the current system has come to the end of its useful life. This re-investment in metering and advanced reading systems will allow the City to increase accuracy, reduce the workload demand, increase frequency of meter reading, allow for leak and theft detection, evaluate outages, and improve overall system management.

- **What data will the City of Durango retrieve from the meter?**
 - The meters measure consumption are programmed to transmit the gallons used via the MIU on regular intervals. Additional information the meters will also notify the City in the event of suspected leaks, meter tampering, low battery and others.

- **Will the metering network be secure?**
 - The data communications use both transmission and database encryption to insure secure data transmission and collection from measurement to billing creation.
- **What are the benefits for a resident?**
 - The system allows for early detection of meter failure, improved billing accuracy, enhanced billing capacities, additional consumption detail, and leak/theft detection. All these items allow for more proactive maintenance and outreach to reduce waste and potential damage because of plumbing issues.
- **My meter was replaced recently. Do I still need to participate in this program?**
 - If your meter was replaced in the last two years, you may already be using the new system, however we are asking you to confirm this to be sure we reach all users. If your meter was replaced more than two years ago, at minimum the radio will need to be replaced if not the whole meter.

- **Will I have to pay for the AMI system?**
 - There is no additional charge for the replacement of your meter and installation of a new radio. These costs are part of the capital projects you are already paying for in your monthly utility bill. However, new construction and code related remodel projects will be required to purchase and install the new City standard meters.

- **Will my billing period change?**
 - The billing period will still be monthly. The new system will allow for better standardization of billing periods by allowing for reads from holidays and weekends. In addition, the billing process will be streamlined by avoiding additional time that was spent with the old infrastructure re-reading failed reads/ communications.

- **How will my billing be affected by the meter exchange?**
 - Billing will not be impacted by the meter exchange. With the new meters and radios, we expect to continue receiving accurate metering data from each customer for billing monthly.

- **Who will install the meters?**
 - The City has contracted with Zenner USA and Vanguard Utility Services to complete this project. Vanguard will be managing the installation process in conjunction with City Staff. All Vanguard or City of Durango representatives will have proper photo identification displayed on their outer garment.

- **Will there need to be plumbing changes as part of the installation?**

- No plumbing work is necessary in most cases; the new meter should fit into the same location as the one being replaced. It is the home owner’s responsibility to correct plumbing deficiencies in any location outside of a meter pit – including meter plumbing inside of any building. If there is a plumbing issue for which the homeowner is responsible, the homeowner will be notified and provided a timeframe to correct the issue to allow for completion of the installation.
- **Will my water be off during the installation?**
 - Water will be out of service for the duration of the installation. A typical meter replacement will take approximately 20 minutes to complete. When water service is returned it may be good to run your water for five to ten minutes to flush any cloudy or discolored water from the system.
- **Is there anything I need to do to prepare?**
 1. The first step is to identify where your meter is located and ensure it will be accessible when a technician arrives. Typically, the meter will be in one of two places:
 - Within a meter pit near one of the property lines, typically closest to the [nearest water main](#) (review City GIS for more info); or
 - Within a crawl space, basement, or plumbing room inside of your property.
 2. Once the location is identified, visit the [appointment website](#) or call **(970) 927-2500** to provide that information and to make an appointment if you found the meter location indoors. In most cases, if a meter is located in a meter pit, no appointment will be necessary.
 3. Ensure an adult (18 years or older) is available at the time of the appointment to allow for replacement of a meter.
- **Do I need to be home for the meter replacement work?**
 - If a meter is located indoors instead of within an accessible meter pit outside, an adult (18 years or older) will need to be available during the installation. As long as a meter pit in an outdoor location is accessible, there should be no need for anyone to be home during the installation.



Who do I contact if I have questions?

- Contact the City of Durango Customer Service Division at 970-375-4801.