



## Environmental Services

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## Universal Water Metering Project

### **Why Water Meters?**

The Regional District of Central Okanagan, proceeded with the installation of water meters (RDCO Water Systems Bylaws No. 1268 )in 2008. The 2 remaining non-metered Regional Water systems, Killiney Beach and West shore Estates will receive meters in 2010.

Water meters are an important tool for measuring the demand for treated water. They provide a fair and equitable payment system that is based on the principle of "user pay." It is our expectation that the new meters will result in reduced water usage, reduced repair costs on existing equipment, and an opportunity for individuals to reduce their water bills by controlling consumption. The water meter will be installed inside your home near the main water shut off valve. All installations will be conducted on an area by area basis by the District's Contractor, Neptune Technology Group (Canada) Ltd.

### **How will I know when installers are in my area?**

When installers enter your area they will drop off an information booklet at your house. This booklet will explain the steps necessary to make an appointment, and what to do prior to the installation. Please refrain from making an appointment until you receive this booklet.

### **Where will the meter be installed?**

The water meter will be installed just downstream of the main water shut off valve in your basement.

### **What if I have a finished basement?**

Water services located behind drywall or paneling does not present a problem. After consulting with you, the installer will cut out a small section of drywall or paneling to gain access to the main shut-off valve. You may cut this hole yourself, but it is recommended that you allow the trained installers to do the work. Once the meter is installed, you have two options. You can cover the hole yourself, or the installer will cover the hole with a carpentry access box. In either case, the hole must not be permanently covered in the event that your meter requires future maintenance. If you have any concerns about access to your shutoff valve, bring a rough sketch to the public information session where you can discuss your concerns with Neptune's project manager.

### **Does the meter have to go in the house?**

The meter must be installed in the house, on your incoming water service. Exceptions are rare and must be approved by the Regional District. In this case a survey will be necessary to determine where the meter will be located. The information booklet will let you know how to arrange for a survey.

### **How long does the installation take?**

A typical installation takes about one hour, barring any necessary modifications.

### **Do I have to be home during the installation?**

An adult at least 18 years of age must be at home during the installation.

**How will the meter reading be obtained?**

The Regional District is installing the latest in meter reading technology. Attached to your meter will be a small device that will send your reading via an electronic signal. A receiving unit located in a vehicle will obtain the reading when the vehicle drives by your house. It will not be necessary for a meter reader to enter your home or property.

**When will billing based on the water meter begin?**

The Regional District will wait until all the water meters have been installed before deciding on the metered rate and when it will be implemented. The earliest that a metered rate may be introduced is expected to be in 2011.

Regional District intends to continue billing on a quarterly basis and will restructure the water rates to include a flat rate component as well as a rate per cubic metre of water consumed, similar to your telephone or natural gas bills, which includes a basic service fee, plus consumption based fee.

In the meantime you will continue to pay the flat quarterly water charge as usual.

## **WATER CONSERVATION**

People tend to reduce their water consumption when they start to pay based on the volume of water they actually use. This was the experience in Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton when those cities installed meters. One of the reasons for this trend is because for the first time people are aware of how much water they really use. Another reason is that people start to reduce the amount of water they waste or they repair leaks.

Having a water meter does not automatically mean that your water bills will go up. In fact, many people who use water wisely may find that their water bills actually go down. Because water use is seasonal, with higher consumption occurring during summer months due to irrigation, you will likely experience slightly lower bills in winter, and slightly higher bills in summer.

Your new water meter has a feature that will allow you to determine if you have a leak. You will also be able to monitor your own consumption and determine how much water you use for irrigation, washing dishes, doing laundry, etc. This information can help you plan how to reduce your water consumption.

Due to irrigation, water consumption in the Regional District is almost 8 times higher in summer than it is in winter. So the key to keeping your water bills lower is to pay careful attention to how much water you sprinkle on your lawns and gardens. Remembering to turn off your irrigation system during rain periods will conserve water. Many people water their lawns far more frequently than necessary. Too much water is actually harmful to your lawn, creating shallow roots and inviting pests and disease.

There are many easy ways to reduce the water you use inside your home. Install a low flow showerhead and faucet aerators. Installing an ultra low-flow toilet can reduce your indoor water consumption by almost 30%. Then there are simple water conservation tips, like turning off the tap when brushing your teeth, or waiting until the dishwasher is full before running it. Saving water here and there can really add up.