

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Why are we switching to smart meters?

Cuyahoga Falls has had smart meters since 2008, but they simply need upgraded. They will more than likely need replaced again in 15-20 years. The City is partnering with Utility Metering Solutions (UMS) to replace all water and electric meters over the next few years. This is known as the NextGen Meter Project.

Is this a new technology for meters to wirelessly transmit water and electric usage?

The technology has been around for years; in fact, all of the following cities currently have AMR (Automated Meter Reading) meters: Akron, Barberton, Cuyahoga Falls, Green, Hudson, Kent, Macedonia, Northfield, Norton, Peninsula, Ravenna, Silver Lake, Stow, Tallmadge, Twinsburg and Wadsworth. Ohio Edison alone has 710,000 smart meters being used in Ohio. The practice of a person manually walking through yards to read meters is a thing of the past.

Will having my meter(s) replaced cost me anything?

There will be no additional customer charges.

Who will install the new meters?

The City has contracted with Utility Metering Solutions (UMS), to install these meters. As a trusted service provider, UMS is confident that they will successfully design and execute the NextGen Meter project based on its track record of successfully executing similar programs for other forward-thinking cities since 2009.

What You Can Expect

How will the meter replacement process work?

You should start seeing UMS personnel working in your neighborhoods beginning in June August 2024. The entire project will take approximately twenty-four (24) months to complete, ending around August 2026. Work will be performed during normal work hours of 8:00AM - 4:00PM (EST). However, for inside installations, some limited evening and Saturday hours will be available upon request.

Appointment notifications will be distributed to customers at least two weeks prior to inside installations.

- Water meters: Meters will be changed out over a few years, expected to begin in August 2024 area by area, and you'll be notified when it is time to schedule an installation appointment.
- Electric meters: Meters will be changed out over a few years, expected to begin in Q4 2024 area by area, and you'll be notified of the short outage period when the meter will be replaced. UMS personnel will carry identification. Door hangers will be left to notify you when the power meter installation is complete. If your meter is behind a locked gate, you will need to be home or leave free access to your meter.

If your service was "OFF" at the meter before installation, we changed your meter, and your service will be left "OFF." If your service was "ON" at the meter before installation, your service will be restored after the new meter was installed.

How will I know when the installation is happening in my area?

For inside meter installations, UMS will notify customers via a USPS letter a week or two before starting inside meter work in an area. For outside meter installations, UMS will notify customers that they will be in the area a week or two before starting work via postal mail, social media, and the project website.

Do I need to do anything as part of the installation process?

It depends on where your meter is located.

- Water Meters: Because water meters are located inside your home, you will need to schedule an appointment at a time convenient for your water meter installation when UMS is in their area. <http://cuyahogafalls.umsscheduling.com>
- Electric Meters: Because most electric meters are located outside your home, you will not be required to be present during the installation unless you have a locked gate or fence.

How do I schedule my meter installation?

UMS will notify you via a USPS letter a week or two before starting work in the area. The letter will provide meter installation details, including how to schedule an installation appointment. Once you receive the UMS Scheduling Notice, you may contact the UMS Call Center at 1-844-741-6248 to schedule the installation appointment. You may also take advantage of online scheduling at: <http://cuyahogafalls.umsscheduling.com> . If you are the owner of a location with a tenant, it will be your responsibility to ensure that your tenant has made an appointment that is convenient for them. Please remember this is a mandatory process.

How will I know that installers are authorized UMS employees?

All UMS installers will have an ID badge indicating their name and their employment with UMS and will be wearing bright yellow t-shirts/jackets/vests with "UTILITY METERING SOLUTIONS" or "UMS" on the back. Installers will travel in vehicles that have a large "UMS" logo magnet on the side.

What happens at an inside water meter installation appointment?

For inside installations, UMS will notify you via a USPS letter a week or two before starting inside meter work in an area.

You can schedule your appointment online at: <http://cuyahogafalls.umsscheduling.com> or by calling the UMS call center at 1-844-741-6248.

The appointment will require the presence of an adult 18 years of age or older, pets be secured, the area be clear and accessible, and plumbing valves should be in good working order.

At the scheduled appointment time, a UMS installer will replace the meter. The installation process will take less than an hour and the water should only be turned off for about 15 minutes, causing minimal disruption. If your service was "OFF" at the meter before installation, we changed your meter, and your service will be left "OFF." If your service was "ON" at the meter before installation, the service will be restored after the new meter was installed. This meter

replacement is mandatory. If customers are not home, the technician will leave a door hanger indicating that customers will need to reschedule their appointment.

What happens during an outside electric meter installation?

If your electric meter is located outside, you don't have to do anything to have your new meter installed. You are not required to be home during the replacement. Expect an installer to knock on the door to notify anyone who happens to be at home that their electricity will be turned off for about an hour, causing minimal disruption. For the safety of the personnel installing the meters, please do the following:

- Keep pets indoors and away from the installers during the time frame your meter is scheduled to be replaced.
- Please ensure the path to the meter and the area around the meter is clear.
- If you have a locked fence or gate, please allow access to the installer to complete the installation.

There may be a short interruption in electric service when the meters are exchanged so we recommend that you unplug sensitive electronic equipment or use a surge protector to prevent the possibility of damage to your equipment or appliances. A door hanger will be placed on the front doorknob following installation to notify customers that the meter replacement was completed successfully.

Will meter installation affect my water or electric use?

The entire installation process will only take about 1 hour. During that time, customers can expect their water or electricity to be turned off for 15 minutes to 1 hour.

I'm on vacation or not available that day. What do I do?

If you will be unavailable at the scheduled appointment time, please call the UMS Call Center at 1-844-741-6248 to reschedule your appointment.

Can I opt out?

No. This process is mandatory. Existing meter equipment has become outdated, and these meters are coming to the end of their useful life. To ensure continued accurate meter readings, these meters must be replaced. Failure to schedule an appointment for an indoor appointment will result in service disruption and associated fees.

I am a local business. What should I expect from this project?

Local businesses will be contacted directly to schedule their meter replacements to ensure minimal disruption.

Will the new meter technology affect my health or privacy?

The technology in the new ACLARA I-210+ Smart Grid Meters and kV2C Gen5 meters use radio signals and new BADGER E-Series meters cellular technology to transmit meter data - neither will negatively affect your health or privacy. The microwatts these meters emit are a fraction of the amount emitted by the cell phones, laptops, or Wi-Fi which most households have. Total transmission time is typically less than 5 seconds per day. In fact, overall health will be improved, and privacy enhanced by replacing vehicles and manual meter reading visits to homes and businesses with environmentally clean radio and cellular communication.