

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(For Website, Billing Window, and Billing Clerks)

**\*\* THE CITY OF THIBODAUX SHOULD REVIEW THIS DOCUMENT BEFORE IT IS PRESENTED TO PUBLIC\*\***

## 1. Why is my water meter being replaced/gas meter being upgraded?

Over time, meters become less accurate and can provide inaccurate readings. By replacing meters, the City of Thibodaux Department of Public Works will be able to bill more efficiently for water and gas usage. In addition, the new systems will include an automatic meter reading technology that will save labor time, prevent any recording errors, minimize wear and tear on vehicles, minimize the need for the city to go on the private property of customers, and allow water line leaks to be identified earlier by notification alarms and analysis of data collected.

## 2. Does this mean my bill will be increasing?

Not necessarily. In cases where rates remain consistent, the new meters will simply record consumption more accurately. In some cases, your bill may increase, but only if the current meter is underreporting usage. Presently, the majority of customers are paying for the water and/or gas they are actually using, while a few customers are only paying for a portion of actual usage. This condition is not fair to all customers. The new system will ensure fairness and equality for all customers from this point forward.

## 3. When will this work be performed?

The work is expected to begin in late January of 2017. The entire project will take 6 - 7 months to complete. In most cases the transition will be completely transparent and will not affect the customers. The work will be performed by approved contractors during normal working hours of 8:00AM – 5:00PM, Monday - Friday.

## 4. How will this affect my service?

A contractor will come to your residence and replace your water meter and/or upgrade your gas meter. The water meter will be checked to verify that water is presently not in use. If no water is being used the meter will be replaced. There will be interruption of water service for approximately 15 – 20 minutes during the change, but after that it will be the same great service (and even better) that you've come to expect. There will be no interruption of gas service during the upgrade.

## 5. How long will it take?



In most cases, it's a simple procedure that will require about 30 - 60 minutes.

**6. How do I know who is authorized to do the work?**

The City of Thibodaux has contracted with Utility Metering Solutions (UMS) to conduct this work. UMS is an experienced meter installation contractor. Each UMS installer will have ID, will wear UMS uniforms (bright yellow shirts or vests), and have successfully completed criminal background checks. UMS installers will travel in marked vehicles with "UMS" on the side.

**7. Do they need to come inside my house?**

No. UMS installers will not need to enter your home.

**8. Do I have to be present for the installation if the meter is outside my home?**

No, if your outside meters are accessible, it will not be necessary for anyone to be home. In this case, the work will take place near the street in the water meter box, or at the outside gas meter location.

However, if your meters are not accessible, for example within a locked area, then please call City of Thibodaux Department of Public Works at **(985) 446-7210**.

**9. I'm on vacation or not available that day. Whom do I call?**

For outside meters which are accessible, it will not be necessary for anyone to be home. In this case, the majority of the work will take place near the street in the water meter box or at the outside gas meter.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact the City of Thibodaux Department of Public Works at **(985) 446-7210**.

**10. Why was I not able to turn on my water after the meter was installed?**

In rare instances, the main cut-off valve to your home may be left off. This will occur when the Utility Metering Solutions (UMS) installation team is not able to pressurize your home following the water meter installation. The normal cause of this condition is when an inside spigot is opened during the installation and subsequently left open. The water is not turned back on to ensure a sink or bath tub does not overflow with the customer is not home to turn the water off. In these cases, your water will be left off and a door hanger will be left on your door providing you a point of contact to call to have your water turned back on immediately.

**11. Is there any special care or maintenance that I need to do to my new meter?**



No, your new meter does not require any maintenance by the homeowner. As before, the City of Thibodaux Department of Public Works will take care of all maintenance. However, please know that this new meter has transmitting technology on it that allows your meter to be read remotely.

## 12. 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 transmission. In fact, exposure to radio waves from smart meters is absolutely tiny compared to cellphones transmissions. The amount of exposure to radio waves decreases with the square of the distance from the radio source and the total transmission time is only 15 seconds per day.

## 13. I still have questions, where can I get additional information?

The City of Thibodaux Department of Public Works is working with Utility Metering Solutions (UMS) to answer everyone's questions as thoroughly as possible. We have taken the following steps to answer your questions:

Frequently asked Questions and Answers will be posted on the City of Thibodaux Public Works Department website at:

**[THIBODAUX DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS Project URL ADDRESS](#)**

Customers may contact the City of Thibodaux Department of Public Works at:  
**(985) 446-7210.**

