In 2003, the Washington State Legislature passed the Municipal Water Law and Water Use Efficiency Program, which require water meters for all customers by 2017.

To meet that requirement, the City of Bellingham must install meters and convert billing for 15,000 single-family residential water customers. This process will take five years to complete.

This document provides an overview of how water meters will be installed and how your household will be affected by the new rates.
**Q** How do I know if I am a metered or unmetered water customer?

**A** Your existing utility bill will tell you.

- Water – Metered Single Family
- Water – Volume Charge
- Water – Unmetered (Single Family)

**Q** Will I be charged a fee for my meter installation?

**A** No. All customers will share the cost through their water rates.

**Q** When will my meter be installed?

**A** Meters will be installed according to a schedule developed by staff and approved by City Council.

Meter installation and conversion to metered water billing depends on where you live. The water meter installation timeline can be viewed below.

**Q** How was the meter installation timeline developed?

**A** Staff analyzed meter reading routes, billing cycles, and installation processes to develop a cost-effective and efficient schedule for both the water utility and customers.

Other factors considered include concurrent work to detect water main leaks and the location of higher-cost water-delivery areas. The City will work during a five-year period (mid-2012 to 2017) to install required meters.

**Q** What size water meter will be installed at my home?

**A** A 5/8” meter is installed on most single-family residential homes.

### ESTIMATED INSTALLATION TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Neighborhood</th>
<th>Scheduled meter installation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silver Beach, Barkley, Alabama Hill, Roosevelt, Irongate, King Mountain</td>
<td>2012-2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgemoor, South, Samish, Puget, Whatcom Falls</td>
<td>2013-2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunnyland, Lettered Streets, Columbia</td>
<td>2014-2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornwall, Birchwood, Meridian, Cordata, Fairhaven, South Hill</td>
<td>2015-2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy Valley, WWU, Sehome, York</td>
<td>2016-2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You will receive notification of meter installation plans specific to your neighborhood.
**Q** How is the meter installed?

**A** If your home already has a water meter assembly box (see below), a crew will install your meter in about 15 minutes.

If you already have a water meter assembly box, a meter will simply be placed inside. Existing boxes will not be relocated.

If you do not have a water meter assembly box, underground utilities will be located. You will see different colors of spray paint in the right-of-way to mark the locations. A blue stake and white paint indicate where water crew personnel will be digging to install the water meter assembly box.

The homeowner is responsible for prompt removal and any desired replacement of all landscaping and structures adjacent to the stake. On the day of installation, water to the house will be shut off up to two hours. The total installation will take about four hours.

**Q** What happens to my landscaping where the meter assembly box is to be installed?

**A** Any plants, trees, shrubs, flower beds, fencing, or other structures adjacent to the blue stake and white paint will need to be removed.

The meter box is 26” long x 18” wide x 20” deep and must not be blocked. If you are concerned about the need to relocate landscaping or structures, call Public Works at 778-7700 to discuss this. Replacing plants is the homeowner’s responsibility.

**Q** Do I need to be at home?

**A** You do not need to be at home during the water meter installation process.

**Q** How will my new meter be read?

**A** All new meters will be read electronically. The meters have tower-based radio capability and allow Public Works staff to collect hourly consumption data for the water service.
Q When do I start to pay a metered rate?
A The timeline for your meter installation and conversion to metered water billing depends on the location of your neighborhood.

Metered rates will go into effect January 1 of the year following your meter installation.

Q Will metered rate billing start for everyone at the same time?
A State law requires the City to meter all water customers by January 2017.

To meet that requirement, the City must install meters and convert billing for 15,000 single-family residential water customers. Budget and staff workload dictate that the City stagger the process over five years.

Q What are the metered and unmetered water rates for single-family residential customers?
A Find information about utility billing, rates, and other water-related issues at www.cob.org/utilities.

Q How much will my bill be when I am switched to a metered rate?
A That is entirely up to you. Use less; pay less.

Many factors impact how much water you use: the number of people living in your home, personal water-use habits, and the efficiency of your fixtures—such as toilets and clothes washer.

Outdoor water use also contributes to your bill. You could reduce your water consumption and what you pay by altering your water-use behaviors, and/or replacing high-water-use fixtures with more efficient ones. Rebates may also be available, see www.cob.org/rebate

Estimate your water consumption at www.cob.org/savewater for a calculator that provides an estimate of how much water your household uses. Additional water use efficiency tips and resources are provided. You can also email waterconservation@cob.org or call Public Works at 778-7700 with questions.

Q Will the sewer portion of my utility bill change?
A Under the current rate structure, single-family residential sewer rates are flat rate and not based on metered water usage.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Visit www.cob.org/utilities, contact Public Works at (360) 778-7700 or email watermeter@cob.org

Este informe contiene informacion importante. Por favor, para información en Español, comunicarse con el Departamento de Obras Públicas al Telefono (360) 778-7905. Gracias.