



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

# Town of Southwick

454 COLLEGE HIGHWAY SOUTHWICK, MA 01077

## Department of Public Works

Telephone (413) 569-6772 Fax (413) 569-5001

### TOWN-WIDE WATER METER REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

The Southwick Water Department (SWD) has implemented a Town-wide water meter replacement program to replace the approximately 2,650 water meters in Town. This Water Meter Replacement Program is an important part of upgrading our water system. Replacing old water meters helps ensure SWD can accurately track individual water usage for billing purposes and monitor/evaluate community water demands. A summary of frequently asked questions about this program are as follows:

#### **Why are water meters being replaced?**

Most water meters are 20 years old and are close to exceeding their useful life.

#### **Who is installing the new meters?**

The Town hired a private contractor, East National Water of Palmer, MA, to complete the installations. All personnel from East National Water will have photo ID badges, shirts bearing the East National Water name and logo, and will be driving a vehicle similar to the one below:



#### **What will the Contractor do at my home/business?**

Generally the installer will locate your water meter, remove the old meter, install the new meter, and install a new radio transmitter. The radio transmitters are housed in a small 4" x 5" box and will snap over the existing meter reading device located outside the building or next to the meter pit. They will then test the radio transmitter, take a picture of the old and new meters, and clean up the area. New check valves may also be installed at select services if the existing check valve is not operating properly or if there is no check valve currently installed.

**How long will the installation take? Will my service be interrupted?**

Under normal circumstances, the installation will take 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The water will have to be turned off until the meter is changed. Please be advised that there may be some trapped air or slight discoloration in the water line that result from turning the water off and on. This should clear up after running your cold water for a few minutes. You may hear some noise as the air exits spigots and fixtures. This is normal.

**When will I receive a notice to schedule an appointment?**

The contractor is breaking the Town into 5 regions and will focus efforts on one section at a time before moving onto another region. The regions are shown on the last page of this flyer. The first region to be addressed is Region 1, followed by 2, 3, 4, and then 5.

**How do I schedule an appointment?**

All customers will be sent a notice requesting they contact East National Water directly to schedule an appointment. Until you receive this notice, there is nothing you need to do. When the installer is ready to schedule your neighborhood, the mailing will give you instructions how to schedule your appointment via phone or internet.

**What will I need to do on the day of the appointment?**

Before you make your appointment, you should ensure that your meter is accessible. You should verify that the installation contractor is displaying the proper identification and then show the installer where your meter is located.

**What are the benefits of the new meters?**

There are several benefits of the new meters, including:

1. Low-flow reading technology which allows for the detection of possible leaks in your plumbing, in which case the Town can notify you before they become serious and costly.
2. Allows for remote reading, permitting SWD personnel to focus efforts on other important tasks as opposed to physically reading meters for two months of the year
3. Quick answers to billing questions
4. Reduces estimated bills
5. Eliminates visits to your property for meter readings

**Do I have to be home at the time of the appointment?**

Yes. Someone aged 18 or over must be home to allow the installers to access the existing meter and to sign to verify the installation was performed.

**How many people will enter my home?**

For most appointments, only a single person from the installation firm will need to enter your home. For a few appointments, the installer may be accompanied by a second person from the same company or a SWD employee.

**How do I know that it is okay to let someone in my home?**

You will have scheduled an appointment with the installation firm for a particular time, so you will know when to expect them. Installation personnel will not attempt to enter your house at other times. The installer will be wearing clothing identifying his or her company (East National Water), will be driving a vehicle with the company's markings, and will have a photo identification badge from that company.

**Could I already have a new meter?**

If you had your meter serviced over the past year, it is possible that your meter has been already replaced with the new Sensus iPerl® meter, which has a white composite (hard plastic) casing. If this is the case, the contractor will not need direct access to the meter, but he/she will need to access the outside meter reading device for testing purposes.

**What if there is a leak at the meter, or another problem, after the meter has been replaced?**

To report a leak at or near the meter after the new meter has been installed, please contact SWD at 413-569-6772. SWD personnel will determine the cause of the leak or problem and take appropriate action. It is important to contact SWD as soon as possible for a timely response to your leak.

**What if I do not want my meter replaced?**

This is a mandatory project. SWD has the right and responsibility to gain access to all premises for water meter work. Failure to schedule your appointment may result in your account being shut off until such time that the meter is replaced. Penalties and fees as established by the Water Commissioners could also apply.

**How much will the new meter cost me?**

There is no additional cost to water customers for the new meters. The program is being funded through the SWD.

**Where is my water meter?**

Your water meter is most likely located in your basement or crawl space, usually along the front wall of your house, where your water service (pipe) enters your home or business from the street. In most situations, the meter will have a shutoff valve on the street side of the meter as the pipe enters the house. Sometimes, you may also have a shutoff valve on the house side of the meter as well.

**Will my water pressure change with the new meter?**

Installation of the new meter type does not affect the water pressure received in your home. The new meters are constructed without internal moving parts which improves water flow but does not affect water pressure.

**What type of information can be transmitted from this equipment?**

The only information transmitted from this equipment is a meter reading. The reading on your water meter is transmitted once every four hours to a secure computer server at the SWD office. This transmission takes less than one second.

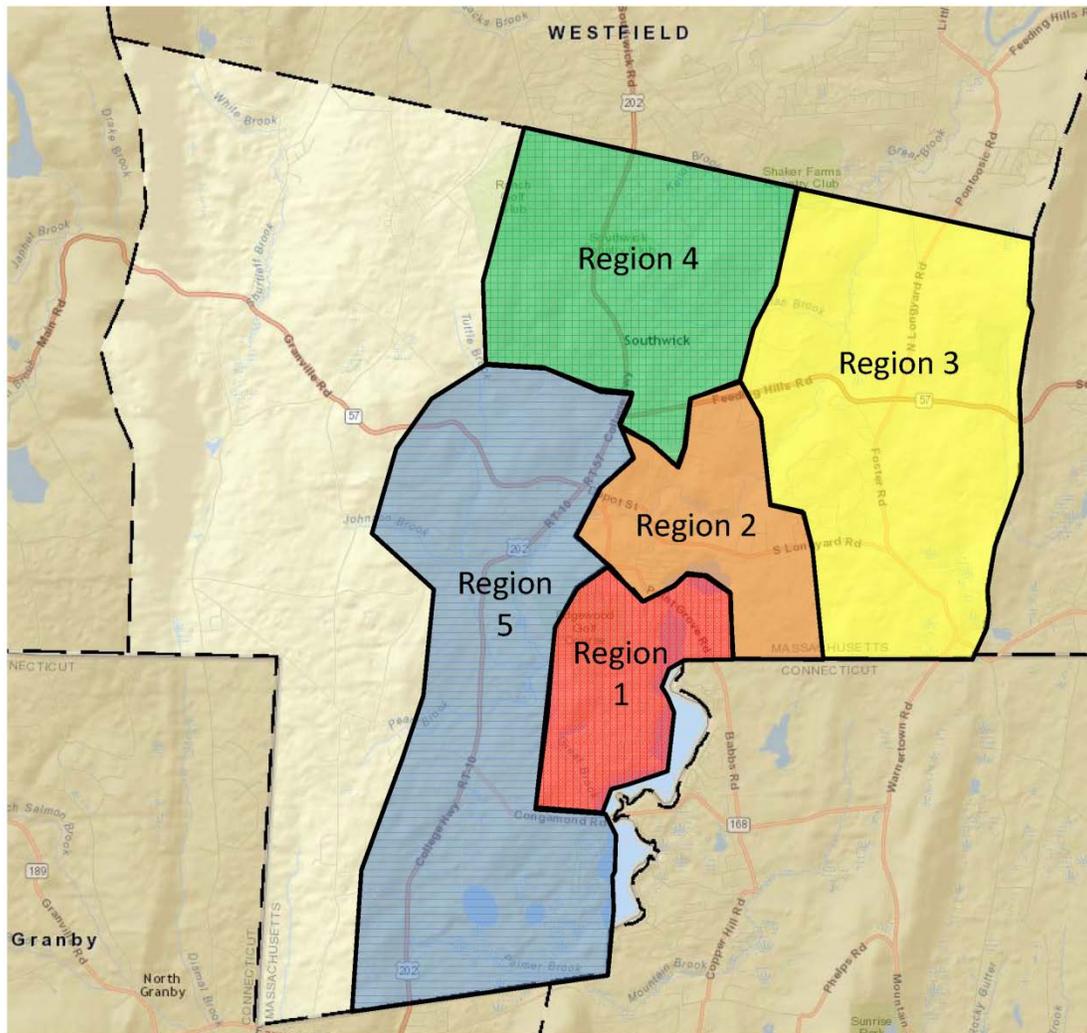
**Will the radio transmitter interfere with my television, cordless phone, garage doors or pacemaker?**

No, the radio transmissions occur on a frequency different from those used by television signals, cordless phones, garage doors and pacemakers. This transmission is regulated by the FCC.

If you have any questions, please contact the Department of Public Works at 413-569-6772.

Randal D. Brown, P.E.  
DPW Director

## Plan of Regions for Town-wide Water Meter Replacement Program



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