



TO METER OR NOT TO METER? THAT IS THE QUESTION.

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In my travels across Western NY I have heard many opinions on metering. Most areas bill on a per 1000 gallon basis. There are a few that do flat rate billing, some of these meters are not even read on a regular basis. With a flat rate, a family of 8 would pay the same water bill as a family of 1. This is not a fair or accurate way to handle water usage.

As Water Operation Specialists, we need to have an accurate figure of the difference between production and usage in other words, water loss. When visiting a water system I always ask about water loss. The numbers range from 2% to as high as 70%. At least there is a number. For a few systems the answer is "I don't know". My next question would be, is everything metered? Even if it is not billed it should be metered and read. This is not considered water loss, just unbilled usage. This will also help you track usage patterns to know if the consumer has unusually high usage, or a leak.

Per the Water Quality Association, the average person in the US uses 80-100 gallons of water per day. A family of 8 could use 800 gallons per day compared to a family of 1 using 100.

Some water usage figures;

Water from a faucet, 1.5 GPM

Clothes washer, 30-35 gallons per cycle

Hand washing dishes, 20 gallons

Automatic dishwasher, 25 gallons per cycle

Shower, 2.5 GPM

Tub bath, 50 gallons

Toilet, 1.6 - 7 gallons

Washing the car, 100 gallons

It all adds up, and quite quickly.

Why do we need water meters and accurate records of these? Fair and equitable treatment for every customer. Meters record water usage for a household, the customer pays for what they use. By paying for what is used, it allows the water system to have fair and equitable rates. Meters allow a system to account for water produced versus water consumed plus promote conservation allowing a customer to regulate their bill by tracking their usage.

WHEN SHOULD METERS BE REPLACED?

A test was done on meters of varying ages. Based on a 9000

gallon per month usage, a 15 year old meter's loss would be 54 gallons in that month, a 20 year old meter would be 90 gallons per month, a 25 year old meter, 378 gallons per month, a 30 year old meter, 1656 Gallons per month. At the end of the year, based on 800 - 15 year old meters, the total loss would be more than a half a million gallons. If these same 800 meters were 30 years old, the loss of revenue would be just under 16 million gallons. It can add up and fast.

Every municipality should have meters, read their meters, bill accordingly and have a meter replacement plan. The increase in revenue will pay for the meter replacement.

Let's all work together to keep our drinking water safe and flowing. I hope to see you in my travels across Western NY. If I can be of assistance, I am only a phone call away. 💧💧