



DUAL METERING FAQ

What is dual metering?

Dual metering is a means to subtract irrigation water usage from the overall water usage for the purpose of lowering sewer user fees. It is accomplished by adding an additional meter in series downstream of the existing domestic meter—branching off the customer's private side for irrigation—and having the customer isolate all irrigation usage to what passes through this additional "dual" meter. The difference in meter reads between the total usage (existing meter), and the irrigation usage (dual meter), will then represent the only usage used to calculate sewer user fees.

How are sewer user fees calculated without dual metering?

Without dual metering (and assessing only domestic usage), Pima County assesses sewer usage fees based on a 3-month winter average (Dec/Jan/Feb) of all water usage through the existing meter, for the entire fiscal year following this three-month average. This usage is used regardless of how much water actually reaches the sewer system and/or is used for irrigation. Pima County will accept a lower 3-month average during the year if successfully appealed by the customer.

Who qualifies for dual metering?

If you are a District customer with an existing residential domestic water meter, and you pay sewer user fees (i.e. not on a septic system), you qualify for dual metering. Commercial or multi-family customers generally separate out their irrigation needs via a dedicated irrigation meter, already excluded from sewer user fees.

What paperwork is involved to establish dual metering?

Other than our standard meter application and payment of the initial fees at our office, the customer will also be required to sign a usage agreement, as well as a right-of-entry to permit District personnel to set, maintain, and/or read the dual meter on private property. The usage agreement and right-of-entry will be non-transferable with the property, and future owners or successors will need to sign new paperwork to continue dual metering.

What does dual metering cost?

There is an initial application fee established by the Board of Directors (currently \$380) for the District to recover costs for materials, labor, inspection, and testing of a dual meter. Typically, there will also be a cost for the customer to isolate their private irrigation system to only being fed by the dual meter. After the cost of the initial installation, the customer will incur an additional monthly base rate of 1/3 the regular base rate (on the existing meter) for use of the dual meter.

What plumbing work is involved?

Dual meters need to be located just within private property, and/or within 5 feet of the existing meter. The installation will involve a tie in to the private side of the customer's service, isolation of their existing irrigation system from the domestic system, and reconnection the irrigation system to solely the dual meter. The specific parts given to the customer, and further specifications about the installation, can be found on the "Modified Service For Dual Metering" detail.

What parts are received when you apply for dual metering?

When the customer completes the application, signs the usage agreement and right-of-entry, and pays the initial dual metering fee, they will receive an upstream and downstream angle meter stop (AMS), a downstream dual check valve, and a "meter jumper" to be installed in place of the future meter. Once this and all other plumbing work is complete by the customer, District personnel are notified and will install ONLY the dual meter and set a meter box.

What sort of inspection and testing is required?

Prior to installing the meter, District personnel will verify the maximum distance from the existing meter is 5 feet, and will also verify the AMS fittings are installed 7-10 inches below the existing ground level. After installing the meter, District staff will test to be sure running only the irrigation system turns both existing and dual meters, and running only water inside the house turns the existing meter. A return visit and further inspection/testing will be necessary for deficiencies.

When can I expect to see changes on my water bill?

Once inspection/testing is complete, beginning reads will be taken for both the existing meter and the dual meter, and returned to the District office for processing. Depending on when during the existing meter's cycle dual meter begins (which will be the same for the dual meter), you may see more or less of a savings from the switchover. The full monthly savings should be seen when dual metering has been in service for a full monthly cycle.

Can I cancel dual metering at a later date?

Yes, termination of dual metering is completely up to the customer at any time, however the initial application fee would be non-refundable. The customer need only contact customer service to discontinue dual metering. District personnel will then recover the dual meter and reinstall the "meter jumper" (so it can still function without the meter), leaving all else in place.

How do I know if dual metering is really worth it for me?

Generally, dual metering is meant for existing residential customers who use large amounts of water for irrigation year round, and especially in the months otherwise used to calculate the average for sewer user fees. To start, you will need to calculate or measure how much irrigation usage makes up your total usage. Then, before making any decision to choose dual metering, we suggest you combine the initial application cost, your cost to isolate and tie over the existing irrigation system, as well as figure in a 1/3 increase in your base rate each month, and compare these costs to what you estimate could be saved in lower sewer user fees over time. Only then can you make an informed decision whether the period to recover these initial costs is appropriate.



CUSTOMER INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS MODIFIED SERVICE FOR DUAL METERING

1. Fill out application, usage agreement/right-of-entry, and pay fees for dual metering at the Metro Water office at 6265 N. La Canada Drive.
2. Receive the dual metering kit, including the upstream and downstream angle meter stops, the downstream dual check valve, and the "meter jumper" that will be replaced with a 5/8" meter once inspection and testing is complete.
3. Be sure to consult local municipal codes regarding permitting, piping materials, depth of irrigation, and backflow requirements.
4. Dial 811 for Arizona Blue Stake (or call 1-800-STAKE-IT) two working days before you dig to have all underground utilities marked in the area you will be working on the private property.
5. Make arrangements with Metro Water personnel to have the water shut off at the meter.
6. Excavate and tee into the existing private domestic service piping, and extend new service line to the dual metering location, being sure to observe the appropriate maximum distance from the existing domestic meter (5 feet).
7. Install the upstream angle meter stop (AMS), supplied in the dual metering kit as shown on the attached detail, being sure to observe the depth tolerances indicated from existing grade down to the AMS (between 7 to 10 inches below grade). The depth for the AMS can be easily determined by measuring down from a piece of lumber or pipe spanning the existing ground on either side of the excavation.
8. Since the only feed for the irrigation system will now come from the new dual meter, it is necessary to isolate the existing irrigation system from the existing domestic water system, and install a new supply line from the existing irrigation system to the downstream dual check valve and AMS at the dual metering location. Be sure to verify the appropriate spacing between the upstream and downstream AMS (to accommodate the dual meter) by installing the "meter jumper".
9. Make arrangements with Metro Water to restore the water to the system, and open up both upstream and downstream AMS to flush out system and/or check for leaks.
10. When the above is completed, call the Engineering office at 575-8100 to inform Metro Water you are ready for inspection/testing.
11. The Metro Water Field Tech will inspect the distance between meters (5 feet max.), the depth to the AMS from existing grade (between 7 and 10 inches), that the meter jumper separates each AMS, and that the dual check valve is installed. Deficient items need to be corrected before the meter is set and testing occurs.
12. Once the meter and box is set, the customer will be asked to turn on the irrigation system. BOTH meters should record usage if correctly installed. The irrigation system is then turned off.
13. The customer will then be asked to turn on the water in the home, and ONLY the existing domestic meter should record usage (with no usage on the dual meter) if correctly installed.
14. If either #12 or #13 is unsuccessful, the customer will need to investigate further to determine why the irrigation system is not fully isolated, make the needed modifications, and then request further inspections.
15. If #12 and #13 test OK, beginning reads are taken from both meters to be reported to the office and dual metering is established.