Frequently Asked Water Metering Questions

July 16, 2013

The information in this packet is the best information available at this time and is subject to change at any time. The purpose of this handout is to assist property owners with questions about the proposed water use and water metering requirements. Please check with Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) staff for any changes.

1. Why is Kittitas County implementing a water metering program?
   - Kittitas County is implementing a water metering program outside of the area defined in WAC 173-539A (Upper Kittitas County rule area) to comply with Growth Management Act requirements surrounding water resources. This program is for those developing a new, non-exempt (see question #4) water use and will not affect pre-existing water uses prior to the adoption date of proposed County Code.

2. What will the new regulations be?
   - All new non-exempt uses of water in Kittitas County (outside the Upper Kittitas County rule area) will be required to meter and will be limited to an annual average of 350 gallons per day of residential use and incidental outdoor usage up to 500 square feet. No more than three times the daily usage (1050 gallons) will be allowed on any given day.

3. What date will Kittitas County start implementing this new regulation?
   - Kittitas County will begin program implementation on November 1, 2013.

4. What uses will be exempt from the metering program?
   - Replacement wells
   - Replacement of a dwelling unit with a pre-existing water source
   - Parcels that already have a complete building permit submitted prior to the adoption of water restrictions in proposed County Code.
   - Existing residential/domestic uses
   - Stock watering and industrial uses per RCW 90.44.050
   - Existing exempt use of half acre irrigation of non-commercial lawn or garden prior to November 1, 2013

5. If I have used my well for stock water, and now want to use it for my home, is that considered a new use? Will this project require a meter?
   - Yes, this project will require a meter because the stock water well had not been utilized for residential use and therefore is considered a new use.

6. When will a shared well need a meter?
   - If two parcels are sharing a well, and there is one bare lot and one lot with a home, the bare lot will need to meter their connection. The existing home will not require a meter.
   - If there is a shared well between two parcels, and both parcels have not established existing residential use or obtained a building permit prior to adoption of the proposed regulations, both parcels are required to meter.
7. If I now have a well being used for watering a large garden (1/2 acre) without a residence, will I be limited by the new regulations?
   - Under proposed regulations any “new use” such as a residence will require metering. The large garden being watered prior to November 1, 2013 will not require a meter.

8. What if I am replacing a trailer or a mobile home that I am living in with a house?
   - A meter will not be required in this case and water use for that residence will not be affected. This situation would be considered an existing residential use.

9. If I want to build a mother-in-law house or turn my garage into an apartment, will I have to meter?
   - If the mother-in-law house or garage would be considered an accessory dwelling unit under building code, it would be considered a new use and would need to be metered. If an addition or remodel is considered an accessory living quarters under building code, it will not be metered or subject to the new regulations.

10. What if I have my building permit already but not my Certificate of Occupancy?
    - Under the proposed County Code, building permits submitted before November 1, 2013 will not be required to meter any existing water usage.
    - If a building permit has expired, the property owner will then be required to meter and will be subject to water usage requirements when a new permit is applied for.

11. What if there is a community well that is serving multiple lots and being used on other lots even though my lot isn’t connected yet?
    - Any new uses must be metered and are subject to new water use regulations. This applies to individual, shared, and Group B water systems.

12. Can I still water my yard with my well?
    - The county code will allow 350 gallons per day of residential use and incidental outdoor water usage up to 500 square feet.

13. What are the fees associated with the metering program going to be?
    - The cost of meters and installation are still being negotiated. There will likely be the cost of purchasing an Automatic Meter Reading System unit as well as a fee associated with annual operating costs.

14. How often will the meters be read?
    - Meters will be read quarterly November through June and monthly July through October to determine the average daily water use.

15. How will I be able to irrigate my large yard or field with only 350 gallons per day?
    - An irrigation water right or other senior water right will need to be purchased to water larger yards and fields, if such a right has not been established. The 350 gallons per day is for residential use and incidental outdoor usage of up to 500 square feet only.