

# Report

**City of Merritt**  
**REGULAR Council Meeting**  
**August 26, 2024**

**File Number: XXXX**

**To:** Cynthia White, Chief Administrative Officer  
**From:** Rick Green, Director of Engineering & Public Works  
**Date:** August 15, 2025  
**Subject:** Water Meter Installations – Non-responsive Customers

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT Council direct staff to turn water off until communication is established with customers after 3 letters from the contractor, one letter from the City and 3 phone call attempts have not established contact.**

**Background:**

The City of Merritt has undertaken a Universal Water Metering project to install water meters at all service points in the water system.

The Water Meter Program is funded through a grant and is being offered free of charge to all existing and qualifying residential properties.

The City Water Works Bylaw 2392 requires water meters on every parcel that receives water service as a condition of the provision of water service. The Bylaw also indicates that the City may refuse or discontinue to supply water to any premises unless the customer requiring water has made arrangements for a meter.

Water meters are currently required to be installed in all new construction at the property owner's cost – these are not being considered in the program at this time due to funding limits.

The contractor completing the installation program will be sending qualifying water customers invitations to book appointments. These appointments are offered 6 days per week with evening times available to ensure as much flexibility as possible for the customers to work around their schedules.

The contractor will be communicating by letter and door tags to encourage booking of the water meter installation. There are 3 letters after the introductory letter (initial, reminder and final). The final letter refers to the bylaw requirements and potential consequences of not participating in the installation program.

Once the final letter is sent by the contractor, City staff will work to initiate communication with the customers that have not booked appointments. Staff are seeking direction from Council on how to proceed to ensure the meters are installed as required.

### **Options / discussion**

The goal of the communications will be to get water customers to book the required installation appointment. This requires a response from the customer, and should they continue to be non-responsive, there needs to be a form of encouragement to get that contact established.

Initially, City staff will attempt to call the customer and send our own letter. This letter will need to contain the consequences of not booking so we ensure every opportunity to comply with the bylaw.

On contact, direct refusals will result in the customer being added to a refusal list for follow up at a later date once the number of refusals is known and staff is able to provide recommendations on next steps for Council consideration.

In situations where attempts to contact continue to fail, a water shut off will generally prompt a phone call within a couple of hours and provide the opportunity to encourage booking or establish a direct refusal. Water would be turned back on immediately regardless of the conversation outcome.

### **Financial / Risk Implications:**

No financial implications are expected regarding this decision

There is potential for aggressive communication with customers and teams of two would be employed to complete water shut off for the safety of our staff, this would also be the strategy once communication is established with the customer and the water is to be turned back on.

Under the Community Charter, the local government has the authority to suspend or discontinue services for non-compliance to bylaws.

### **Strategic Plan Reference:**

None

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Rick Green**  
**Director of Public Works and Engineering Services**