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Water Sub-Metering on the Rise in Canada

Spiking utility prices across Canada are motivating many owners and developers of multi-tenant buildings and condominiums to adopt utility sub-metering, specialized usage-metering technology that enable allocating or recovering utility costs by measuring and billing the utility consumption of individual apartment units or spaces. Sub-metering electricity consumption has become the most widely adopted sub-metering solution over the past few years, but installing sub-metering equipment to measure and bill for water usage is also rapidly gaining momentum with developers constructing new apartment buildings and condos.

“Water costs are going to increase just like electricity costs have over the past decade,” says Ephram Spiegelman, marketing and sales VP at Enercare Connections, Canada’s largest non-utility sub-metering provider. “Nine out of every ten new sub-metering projects installed by Enercare at this time include both water and electricity sub-metering. Building developers are aware that they will save an average of approximately 40% in the first year with electricity sub-metering, and rising water prices makes it likely they will experience similar savings by installing water sub-metering.”

Water sub-metering benefits

Like electricity sub-metering, water sub-metering delivers more accurate billing and enables full transparency of incurred utility costs, vital to building occupants or owners seeking to cut utility costs. Installed inside a building suite or unit for each water service, Enercare’s water sub-metering devices measure precisely the volume of water consumed within each building unit, and transmit usage information to data collection centers for processing and billing occupants for their water consumption.

“Water sub-metering enables tenants and residents to take direct control of their personal water consumption and utility cost,” says Spiegelman. “Sub-metering makes sense for property owners and building managers because it frees them from excessive utility costs incurred by tenants with no financial incentive to curb unnecessary electricity or water use when utilities are included in the rent.”

Water sub-metering accuracy

The water sub-metering equipment Enercare installs in apartment buildings and condos are manufactured by Swiss-based GWF MessSysteme AG, conforming to European EN 14154 regulatory standards for ensuring high metering accuracy. In contrast to plastic or polymer-construction “pulse-

based” water sub-meters that measure water consumption by sending a “pulse” notification at 10-gallon intervals, Enercare uses Swiss-made GWF automated water sub-meter systems using separate “M-Bus” electronic communications that provides absolute register reads for precise measurement accuracy, high data integrity, and robust operational reliability without the need for battery replacement.

“Building developers and installation subcontractors like Enercare’s brass-fitted GWF water sub-meters because they don’t leak after installation, unlike those plastic-fitted water sub-meters,” says Serge Milter, Enercare sub-metering project manager. “They like that we include water sub-meters for every building unit — one for hot water, one for cold — but they especially like the fact that the high accuracy of our water sub-meters does not degrade over time — and that’s the key metric for water sub-metering.”

Regulating water sub-metering

Electricity sub-metering in Canada is highly regulated by provincial governments, and electricity sub-metering equipment requires approval by Measurement Canada, the federal agency responsible for approving and inspecting measuring devices to ensure accuracy in the selling of measured goods. However, water sub-metering



Photo by Jennifer Murray from Pexels

and water sub-metering and equipment are not regulated in Canada — yet.

“Water sub-metering will potentially be regulated in Canada,” says Milter. “We also believe that it’s highly likely that Measurement Canada will use our Europe-approved GWF water sub-metering technology as the basis for those future regulations and requirements. We’ve been using GWF water sub-meters in Canada for more than four years, the technology has been proven in Europe for more than 30 years, and it is also North America NSF-61 certified to be operationally safe, leak resistant, and does not leach chemicals into water systems.”

“Future-proofing”

Water sub-metering installation most often occurs in the building construction phase rather than retrofitting within existing buildings. Installation requires access to suite or unit water plumbing pipes and wiring for power and communications with sub-meters.

Building developers who do not install water sub-metering during the initial

construction are advised to include “rough-in” provisioning of the necessary plumbing and wiring needed to install water sub-metering later — “future proofing” their buildings as a hedge against inevitably higher water prices.

“Developers and contractors are discovering the advantages of involving our sub-metering teams early in the building design and construction planning stages,” says Enercare’s Spiegelman. “They are also discovering the advantages of partnering with Enercare for all their utility sub-metering needs. With Enercare, developers deal with one team, working together under one roof, providing a complete end-to-end sub-metering solution. Tenants and residents receive one bill for all their sub-metering utilities, and receive responsive single-point-of-contact service and support from the largest utility sub-metering

company in Canada. Think of it as ‘future proofing’ your utility-services future.”

Want to know more about [sub-metering](#)?

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operations of metering systems.

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