



# Regional Board Report

## Request for Decision

**To:** Regional Board  
**From:** Director of Engineering Services  
**Date:** January 12, 2023  
**Subject:** New Water Systems Regulation Bylaw

**Voting Entitlement:** *All Directors – Weighted Vote – Majority (LGA s.210)*  
*Bylaw Adoption – Weighted Vote – 2/3 Majority (LGA s.228)*

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**Purpose:** To consider a new Water Systems Regulation Bylaw.

### Executive Summary:

The Regional District owns and operates six water systems which service more than 1,100 users and more than 1,600 properties. The largest has over 300 properties and the smallest only 8. Notwithstanding the size of the system or the number of households served, all are required to meet the same Drinking Water Guidelines and Standards.

The new bylaw includes the following items for consideration:

- Mandatory Pit water meters for all future connections
- Water meter cost updates
- Capital cost update for water meter pit installation, administration fee, and minimum charges
- Provision for unauthorised water system connections (water theft and unmetered water use)
- Continuation of User Fees at water turn off
- No charge seasonal turn on and off (1 each per year)
- Minor housekeeping (i.e., definitions, unmetered property charge etc.)

Should the Board support first, second and third readings of the proposed new bylaw, the legislation permits the Board to further consider a second motion to adopt the bylaw.

**Recommendation #1:** *All Directors – Weighted Vote – Majority (LGA s.210)*

**THAT** the Regional Board give first, second and third readings to Regional District of Central Okanagan Water Systems Regulations Bylaw No. 1513, 2023.

**Recommendation #2: Bylaw Adoption – Weighted Vote – 2/3 Majority (LGA s. 228)**

**THAT** the Regional Board adopt Regional District of Central Okanagan Water Systems Regulation Bylaw No. 1513, 2023.

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Prepared by: Clarke Kruiswyk, Engineering Services Analyst and Travis Kendel, Engineering Services Manager

Approved by:



David Komaike, P.Eng., Director of Engineering Services

Attachment(s):

1. RDCO Water Systems Regulations Bylaw No. 1370, 2015 – (*Redlined with proposed changes*)
2. RDCO Water Systems Regulations Bylaw No. 1513, 2023. (*New*)
3. Presentation

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**Strategic Plan Alignment:**

Priorities: Sustainable Communities, Environment

Values: Resiliency, Good Governance

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**Background:****Mandatory Pit water meters for all future connections**

As part of the metering program implemented in 2010, properties have a combination of RDCO owned in-home and pit water meters. In-home water meters are installed where the water service enters the home and are inefficient, onerous, and operationally expensive to maintain. Pit water meters are installed in water meter pits located at the property line. A water meter pit and the appurtenances of a pit water meter have a higher initial cost; however, provide several benefits to the operation of the water system including:

- Meter accessibility for maintenance and replacement
- Full property metering (i.e., identification and notification of water service leaks, less tampering and theft)
- Back flow prevention
- Permits weather protected temporary connections
- Eliminates risks of operators entering and working on private property and RDCO assets on private property

Water meters have an average expected useful life of approximately 20 years. Scheduling and accessibility of in-home water meters has already been challenging. As more water meters fail and require replacement, it will create more challenges to maintain in-home meters. The proposed bylaw change is to require a pit water meter for all new water service connections and those with a building permit conducting a significant renovation at the owner's cost. Existing properties with an in-home water meter will not unilaterally be required to install a water meter pit.

The approximate additional cost of a water meter pit of \$3,000 will be the responsibility of the owner and collected at time of building permit in conjunction with other applicable water service connection fees.

### **Water meter cost updates**

Schedule A of the current bylaw, as amended through bylaw 1442, outlined the water meter fees by year from 2019 to 2022. The previous fees were indexed for inflation by 2%; however, the actual costs have increased higher than projected. The proposed bylaw updates the fees to reflect the current costs of a pit water meter and indexes the fees annually by 6%; more reflective of current and projected inflation to 2027.

For simplicity, the table has been updated to only include the most common meter size which represents nearly all of the current water meters given that the water systems primarily service residential properties. Should a larger meter be required, the fee will be determined based on the supplier cost and applicable administration fee. Additionally, the "pit water meter surcharge" has been removed from the current bylaw and simply included in the meter costs to reflect that all meters will be installed in a meter pit.

### **Capital cost update for water meter pit installation, administration fee, and minimum charges**

Added a mechanism to Schedule A to collect capital costs related water meter pits in addition to updating administration fee and minimum charges to be more reflective of actual costs. A provision has also been included to allow fees to be reduced or removed if alternate funding is available for the applicable works such as United Way funding the cost of water meter pit installations for properties impacted by the White Rock Lake wildfire.

### **Provision for unauthorised water system connections**

The intention of the change is to clarify the options available to RDCO staff in the event of an unauthorised connection or works to the water system to help reduce tampering, theft, and unmetered water use. The initial response for unauthorised works will be education; however, this bylaw change clarifies options available to motivate bylaw compliance and maintain the safety of the water system.

### **Continuation of User Fees at water turn off**

User fees (base and consumption) currently only apply when the water to the property is turned on. Most of the properties have year-round water service but to reduce the administrative burden of seasonal water turn on and off, the proposed bylaw change will charge user fees to all properties if the water is on or turned on after the new bylaw effective date and continue to apply until the water connection is physically disconnected or approved by the Regional District Officer. In exchange, the typical \$150 turn on and turn off site visit fee will be set to \$0 for the first turn on and turn off each year.

In addition, this change will reduce the monitoring, tracking, and enforcement of unaccounted water use as well as bring the bylaw in line with other local service providers.

## Minor housekeeping

In conjunction with the more significant bylaw updates, the bylaw is proposed to be updated with minor housekeeping items including:

- Definition of “Regional District Officer” to reflect department name change
- Definition clarification of drip irrigation
- Addition of “Unmetered” property to the penalty
- Typo corrections and minor edits.

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## Considerations:

### *Organizational/External:*

- Difficulty of in-home meters and inspections
- Water meter pits include backflow prevention, maintained by RDCO

### *Legal/Statutory Authority:*

- Local Government Act, Imposition of fees and charges, s. 397

### *Financial:*

- Cost premium for meter pits vs in-home with backflow prevention and annual testing. Purchase cost vs. lifetime cost.

### *Alternate Recommendation:*

**THAT** the Regional Board receive the Water System Regulation Bylaw Update report from the Director of Engineering Services, dated January 12, 2023 for information.

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**Approved for Agenda**



**Brian Reardon, CAO**