

**MIDDLE TRINITY GROUNDWATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**VOLUNTARY METERING PROGRAM
MANUAL**

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Middle Trinity Groundwater Conservation District Voluntary Metering Program Manual

I. Introduction; Overview of Voluntary Metering Program

The Middle Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (“District”) has developed this Voluntary Metering Program Manual (“Manual”) in accordance with District Rule 13.6. The purpose of the District’s Voluntary Metering Program is to allow a well owner to prove that the owner is not capable of producing the maximum amount of groundwater that the owner is authorized to produce under District Rule 3.2. The maximum amount of groundwater that can be produced under Rule 3.2 once a well owner has obtained an Operating Permit from the District is three (3) acre feet per contiguous acre per year. District Rule 1.1 defines contiguous acres or contiguous property as acres within the same continuous boundary associated with the right to produce groundwater that are owned or leased by a single landowner (for the entire definition of “contiguous” or “contiguous property”, see District Rule 1.1).

Because the District does not require wells to be metered, District permits are issued on the basis of a well operating at its maximum production of 24 hours per day, 7 days per week (24 x 7). Wells that are exempt and do not have to be permitted are considered to also operate at a maximum production of 24 x 7. The Voluntary Metering Program allows a well owner to demonstrate, through meter readings, that the existing wells on the owner’s property do not actually produce what the Operating Permit and/or the approved registration form(s) show that the wells are capable of producing on a 24 x 7 basis. The well owner is required to select one of the options discussed in more detail in Subsection (A) below and to submit meter readings to the District. In order to participate in the Voluntary Metering Program, the well owner is required to adhere to all of the provisions in District Rule 13.6 and this Manual.

Any person interested in participating in the Voluntary Metering Program should review District Rule 13.6, the contents of this Manual, and should contact District staff for the necessary application forms. All participants in the Voluntary Metering Program must first be approved by the District’s Board of Directors (“Board”) through the application process. **It is important to note that a well owner who participates in the Voluntary Metering Program is responsible for all civil penalties associated with groundwater produced in excess of the maximum amount authorized under Rule 3.2.**

A. Options for Participating in Voluntary Metering Program

If a well owner chooses to participate in the Voluntary Metering Program, the owner must choose between one of the following options:

1. **Wait to Drill Option** – Requires the well owner to submit meter readings to the District for at least one (1) year before the new well can be drilled. The steps associated with this option include:

- a. Submit an application to participate in the Voluntary Metering Program to the District that indicates this option has been selected;
- b. After Board approval of the application, all existing wells on the property must be metered at the owner's own expense with approved meters as specified in Section II of this Manual;
- c. The well owner must then file a meter installation form to have District staff either inspect the meter sealing or place the seal on the meter. Production cannot resume from the existing wells until after the seal is placed on the meter;
- d. Meter readings must be submitted to the District on a monthly basis for a minimum of one (1) calendar year from the date the meters are installed and sealed;
- e. After the one (1) calendar year period has ended, District staff will review the final meter readings for the year and determine whether the well owner produced less than the maximum amount authorized and if so, District staff will calculate the sum total amount of groundwater that the well owner may apply for (the difference between the maximum amount from all wells authorized to be produced and what the well owner actually produced during the one (1) calendar year period);
- f. If the well owner produced less than the maximum amount authorized, District staff will inform the well owner of the amount of groundwater that the owner may apply for, and the well owner may apply for an Operating Permit if the owner intends to drill a new well that requires a permit. If the owner intends to drill a new well that is exempt from permitting, the owner may submit a registration application for the new exempt well and may apply for an Operating Permit amendment to amend the amount of groundwater authorized to be produced from the existing well(s) that currently produce under the Operating Permit;
- g. After the application(s) are approved by the Board, the well owner may drill the new well and must file a restrictive covenant form in the deed records; and
- h. The well owner must continue to submit meter readings to the District on a quarterly basis from the time the new well is drilled and thereafter.

2. Proceed to Drill Option – Allows the well owner to drill the new well as soon as the Board approves the application. The steps associated with this option include:

- a. Submit an application to participate in the Voluntary Metering Program to the District that indicates this option has been selected along with either one of the following: (i) an Operating Permit application for the drilling of a new well that requires a permit; or (ii) an Operating Permit amendment application for the existing permitted well and a registration application for the drilling of a new exempt well;

- b. After Board approval of the applications, the well owner may drill the new well and must file a restrictive covenant form in the deed records;
- c. The existing wells and the new wells on the property must be metered at the well owner's own expense;
- d. The well owner must then file a meter installation form to have District staff either inspect the meter sealing or place the seal on the meter. Production from any of the wells may not resume until after the seal is placed on the meter;
- e. Meter readings must be submitted to the District on a monthly basis for a minimum of one (1) calendar year from the date the meters are installed and sealed;
- f. The well owner should review each month's meter reading to make sure that the owner does not exceed the maximum authorized production;
- g. A new Operating Permit or Operating Permit amendment issued prior to the drilling of the new well is valid only for the one (1) calendar year period from the date the meters are installed and sealed. After the one (1) calendar year period has ended, District staff will review the final meter readings for the year and determine whether the well owner produced less than the maximum amount authorized and if so, District staff will calculate the sum total amount of groundwater that the well owner may apply for (the difference between the maximum amount authorized to be produced from all wells and what the well owner actually produced from all wells during the one (1) calendar year period);
- h. If the well owner produced less than the maximum amount authorized, District staff will issue a new Operating Permit or Operating Permit amendment that authorizes production from the newly drilled well and that includes the sum total amount of groundwater that the well owner was authorized to apply for based on the meter readings from all wells from the one (1) year period; and
- i. The well owner must continue to submit meter readings to the District on a quarterly basis from the time the new Operating Permit or Operating Permit amendment is issued and thereafter.

B. Requirement to File Form in Deed Records

After the Board approves an application to participate in the Voluntary Metering Program, the well owner is required to file a restrictive covenant form in the deed records of the county/counties where the wells and property are located. The District will provide the form to the well owner for submission in the deed records and the well owner is required to provide proof that the form has been properly filed in the deed records to the District. The purpose of this filing in the deed records is to put prospective purchasers of the property and/or wells located on the property on notice that the wells are participating in the Voluntary Metering Program and that failure to

continue participation in the program will require certain wells to be capped or plugged.

II. Approved Meters

All meters required to be installed on existing and new wells must be a meter approved under this section. Meters approved under this section include meters that meet all of the following minimum specifications:

- a. All meters must be mechanically driven or electronic water meters with digital or mechanical totalizers;
- b. The totalizer must not be resettable and must be capable of a maximum reading greater than the maximum expected production. Battery operated registers must have a minimum five-year life expectancy and must be permanently hermetically sealed. Battery operated registers must visibly display the expiration date of the battery. Battery operated registers must visibly display when a low battery condition exists at least one month prior to battery failure so that it can be replaced before the battery is dead;
- c. All meters must meet the requirements for registration accuracy set forth in the American Water Works Association standards for cold-water meters as those standards existed on **[DATE OF MANUAL ADOPTION]**, or later. The totalizer must read in units small enough to measure the annual water use to within the nearest 0.1 percent of the maximum amount authorized to be produced;
- d. The water meter must be certified by the manufacturer to register neither less than 95 percent nor more than 105 percent of the actual volume of water passing through the water meter when installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. This requirement shall be met throughout the water meter's normal operating range without further adjustment or calibration; and
- e. The water meter shall be designed and constructed so that it will meet the following criteria:
 1. Maintain the required accuracy;
 2. Totalizer must be protected so that it is impossible to alter the totalizer reading without disassembling the meter or the register;
 3. Clearly indicate the direction of water flow;
 4. Clearly indicate the serial number of the water meter;
 5. Has a register that is sealed from all water sources and is readable at all times in close proximity to the meter, whether the system is operating or not;
 6. The meter is able to be physically sealed to prevent unauthorized manipulation of, tampering with, or removal of the water meter. Seals will be installed in accordance with Section III of this Manual; and
 7. Is equipped with a manufacturer-approved measuring chamber through which all water flows. A measuring chamber is a cylindrical chamber in

which a water meter is installed that is calibrated to match the measuring element of the water meter and the nominal size of the pipe in which it is installed. There are cases where this measuring chamber is part of the meter while other meters have to be installed with a separate manufacturer-approved measuring chamber.

III. Meter Installation and Sealing Specifications

A. Meter Installation

All meters must be installed according to the manufacturer's published specifications in effect at the time of the meter installation. After a meter has been installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications, the well owner is required to submit a form to the District notifying the District that the meter has been installed and that the meter is ready to be sealed. The manufacturer installation requirements must be strictly adhered to in order to pass the District's installation inspection and the meter cannot be sealed without the presence of District staff.

B. Meter Sealing

The well owner cannot begin producing from the metered well(s) until the meter has been sealed. Upon receipt of a form notifying the District that a meter has been installed, District staff will coordinate with the well owner on a mutually agreed upon date and time to conduct the meter sealing. Only an approved meter installer or District staff are authorized to seal a meter.

C. Removal of Meter for Repairs

A water meter may be removed for repairs and the well remains operational provided that the District is notified prior to removal and the repairs are completed in a timely manner. The readings on the meter must be recorded immediately prior to removal and at the time of reinstallation. The record of production during the time that a meter has been removed from the well for repair will be calculated on a 24 x 7 basis.

D. Cost of Meter, Meter Installation, and Meter Sealing at Owner's Expense

All costs associated with meters installed on existing and new wells, meter installation, and meter sealing, including the cost of the seal, are to be paid by the well owner.

APPENDIX A
DISTRICT RULE 13.6

APPENDIX B
APPLICATION TO PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTARY METERING
PROGRAM

APPENDIX C
METER READING FORM

APPENDIX D
METER INSTALLATION COMPLETION FORM

APPENDIX E
RESTRICTIVE COVENANT FORM