SMARTPHONE-BASED MANUAL READING

What is SPMR?
SPMR™ (Smartphone Meter Reading™) is an innovative field data collection system that leverages the widespread use, power and value of smartphones (or tablets) to help utilities of all sizes and types to collect and validate field data, faster and less expensively than ever before.

What kind of field devices are supported?
SPMR supports any device, e.g., smartphone or tablet that operates on Android 7.0 or greater.

Can I buy smartphones/tablets from you?
Because you can get devices quicker and cheaper from great companies like AT&T, Sprint, Verizon, T-Mobile, Wal-Mart, Target, Amazon, etc., we promote a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) concept. This gives customers the flexibility to get any supported device they want, at the lowest possible price. BUT, if you must buy smartphone and/or a plan thru us, then in some instances, we may be able to help. Ask your SPMR Sales Rep.

Smartphones and their plans are expensive.
They are a lot less expensive than you think. Ruggedized smartphones are often $300 to $499. And phone plans start as low as $29 per month.

Do I have to have a Cell Plan for my devices?
No. You don't have to get a cell data plan. You can operate in a Wi-Fi only mode whereby you upload/download your data in the office (or any trusted Wi-Fi hotspot). Note that a Wi-Fi only mode will not provide connection to Google Maps or real time uploading of data, but all other features of SPMR are present.

What about ruggedization concerns?
Smartphones are more ruggedized than you think. Specifically, many are IP68 (waterproof without a case) and Mil-Std-810 certified (drop, shock resistant). Smartphone cases will usually give less ruggedized smartphones the same specs as more expensive ruggedized handhelds.

Do you repair phones or other Android devices?
No, but we can refer you to organizations that do.

What if I change phones/devices? Can I transfer my license to a new phone/device?
Yes. You can transfer a phone license to a new/replacement device at any time. This transfer process only takes a few minutes and it's free.

I'm too small to afford a cloud-based collection system.
SPMR allows you to afford a fully functioning data collection system for very little money and you can get started the same day.

We're too big to need meter reading on smartphones.
Your utility personnel either have - or will inevitably have – a smartphone. If you're ever in a pinch to read meters, then anyone with an Android device can be a "resource" in minutes, and for a lot less than what traditional proprietary systems charge.

We're starting/in the middle of/fully deployed with AMR/AMI, so we don't need SPMR for "manual" meter reading.
Just like PCs didn't do away with paper, even having a fully deployed AMR/AMI system doesn't eliminate the need to manually read meters, e.g., non-reporting AMR/AMI devices, irregular readings, etc. Now you can dispatch reads to your Field Staff - or download meters to be read from your phone, and remember, SPMR can also do meter changes, move-ins, move-outs, cutoffs and AMR/AMI installations.

What about interfacing with my Utility Billing System? Who do you interface to/with? How does that work?
We use an industry standard format that most billing providers support (charges may apply). Ask your billing provider if they support the "Datamatic RouteSTAR" format. If your provider doesn't support our file format (rare), we can help create an interface (additional charges apply) or you can use our easy-to-use CSV import formats to get you "reading" as quickly as possible.

What about software support?
We have a full-service Call Center with experienced and trained personnel. We handle calls 24/7. Our Call Center Hours are 7:30 to 5:30 Central Time. 214 540 5050.

Where is my data kept? How do I know it won't be lost? Stolen/intercepted?
We store your data in a professional cloud provider, with 24/7/365 uptime. Your data is completely secure, behind professional firewalls - all data over the air is encrypted so it is virtually impossible to steal.

Can I do meter changes? Move-ins, Move-outs, Cutoffs?
Yes, you can do meter reading, move-ins, move-outs, cut offs, meter changes and AMR and AMI installation tracking on the SPMR platform. Ask your rep for more info.

How quickly is the data transferred between the Phones/Devices and the Cloud?
Lightning fast, just as fast as you would send a text. For example, a route of 500 meters can download to your smartphone in less than 3 seconds.

What's your Utility experience?
We've built meter reading and work order systems for some of the very biggest utilities, water, gas and electric. Our resources have 200+ years of experience with utility companies of all sizes and types. When you see what we've done with SPMR, we think you'll be sold.

What about bug fixes? How do those get handled/distributed?
Web fixes are published over the weekend with an advance message to all users. Phone software is a

download process. Users are notified by our system and they can download a new version in less than 30 seconds.

What about new features/enhancements? How do those get handled/distributed?
Releases usually contain both enhancements and bug fixes. We're very open to new ideas, so if you want something in your SPMR System, then let us know.

Contract? What is the term? What are the requirements?
We have a simple 2-page Subscription Agreement (T's and C's) and a 3rd page outlining the costs. Net is that you are subscribing to use the system and to receive support as long as you pay your annual fees.

What about using my device in the rain?
Many Smartphones and tablets come with an IP68 (waterproof) rating. And many of these include "wet touch", which is designed to ignore droplets and to allow input only from your finger or glove. For a list of recommended ruggedized Smartphones, ask your SPMR rep.

What about cold temperatures - wont' the screen freeze up?
As with water protection, ruggedized smartphones include temperature extremes to avoid this. Many go to minus 4 F.

How many phone users can the system support?
Our SPMR system is designed to use the latest communications techniques – so it's truly not an issue. Our dynamic server configurations allow us to grow and adapt to virtually any sized client.

Can I change a reading after it's been sent?
Yes. The system is adaptive in that your phone data is your web data - and vice versa. So, if you re-enter a reading on the phone, that reading gets copied to SPMR Web immediately so both readings are on the Web Server. Or you can change a reading on SPMR Web interface (Admin). You are always in control of which readings go to billing.

What about field codes and notes?
Readers can enter reasons why they can't obtain a reading (Skip Codes), situations they find in the field that need further attention (Trouble Codes), and free-form comments (default is voice to text). All entries are copied to SPMR Web in real time. The system also includes Instruction Codes (e.g., Bad Dog, Contact Customer), Location Codes (e.g., Left Front, By Mailbox), Account Codes (e.g., Active/Inactive), etc.

Can I take multiple photos for one account?
A photograph is worth 1,000 words. We're not sure if 2 photos are worth twice as much, but if one photo isn't enough, then remember that you can take up to 5 pictures per meter record. Some limitations apply. Ask your SPMR Rep.

What phone networks/providers, e.g., AT&T, Verizon, Sprint, T-Mobile are supported?
All carriers are supported - the application is network independent.

How much data goes over the network - I don't want to get a huge cell data bill.
Raw route and reading data are minimal, e.g., about 1 kilobyte per meter. Regardless of your phone's photo settings, we reduce the images to an average photo size of 100k. With cellular data plans starting at 1Gb, and with most group plans providing "shared" data, we don't think you'll run into data problems because of SPMR. Doing the math, it would take almost 10,000 readings and photos per month to reach the minimum 1Gb data threshold. But if you did have data problems, then know that SPMR can be configured to send pics only via Wi-Fi.

What happens if a Reader is out of network range?
SPMR smartphone software is always looking for a network connection (cell data, Wi-Fi), so in the off chance that a Reader is in a place where network connectivity is unavailable, rest assured that when they DO come back into coverage, that all of the data will be sent – automatically in the background – to SPMR Web.

What utility types can I read using SPMR? Electric? Gas? Water?
Yes – you can read water, gas and/or electric meters using our smartphone software.

What about Training?
We offer online, interactive training by our experienced Customer Service Reps.

What about Setup? How long does that take?
Setup is a breeze. Once you have your phones in hand and the billing interface, setup can be done very quickly, often within hours.

Support
We use tools like TeamViewer to allow our CSRs to take a look at your computer if necessary, or for you to see what they are doing on their PC.

References?
We'll be glad to share a list of happy customers, upon request. Feel free to ask these utilities anything about their SPMR experience. You'll see why so many people are switching to SPMR!