



TOP 10 FIELD HACKS



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Just as infrastructure is aging, so is the water industry's workforce. In the American Water Works Association's 2018 State of the Industry report, one-third of respondents listed attracting and retaining talent as a concern.

Municipalities provide job security that results in careers spanning decades. While the employees may enjoy the perks and benefits of longevity, the water utility benefits from the one thing only time can give you--experience. Our industry's experienced veterans have decades of knowledge that isn't learned in the classroom but in the field.

Entry level positions in the water industry are no easy task. Often times, water utilities won't require relevant experience or will advertise "on the job training." This is great for the up and coming generation looking to get their foot in the

door. It also works to get warm bodies to the interview table. However, this creates a significant responsibility on the shoulders of the organization. Water utilities need to be prepared and equipped to engage and develop this generation to stay with the organization and in the water industry.

Utilize key staff and encourage peer to peer training in the field. This will train new hires and allow current staff to take ownership and accountability for their role in the future of your department. Master Meter, Inc. interviewed some of our seasoned field crew friends. Based on their feedback, we created a list of some "tricks of the trade" that you can share with new employees. Remember that your human capital is your greatest asset.



TOP TEN FIELD HACKS

Master Meter, Inc. interviewed members of field operation crews across several water utilities in Texas. They gave us these Top 10 Hacks from the Field you can share with your own staff. See which ones your crews have heard before.



Listen for the singing sound of a service leak. It sounds like a faucet that's barely on. Place a cutoff wrench on a leak and you can hear or feel the vibrations.



When loosening the meter spud, place a block of wood inside the meter box between the meter and side wall. This keeps the meter in place and gives you more leverage.



Having the right tool for every job may not always be an option. Allow room for innovation. A golf club makes a great option to remove the meter box lid from a standing position. Simply cut off the club head and form the end to easily open metal meter lids.



Each meter is equipped with a meter number (on the cap) and ID number. It's best practice to read the ID number which is protected by the glass and is more visible and exposed. The meter number can be difficult to read or missing.



When making the switch from manual read to AMI, consider installing the new meters in the winter when water use is lower. This helps reduce a customer's "sticker shock" when spring and summer hit.



Embrace technology. Stay in tune with the technologies available by attending conferences and reading industry publications. This foresight will keep your utility moving forward.



Got a meter box filled up with water? Use a long cylinder clear tube to read a meter. On the flip side, if the meter is dirty, keep a spray bottle on hand to quickly clean off the glass to read the meter.



Have a seized up curb stop? Tap the side of a curb stop with a ball-peen hammer and it usually works afterwards. This practice works especially well on old curb stops that just won't shut off easily.



#1 hack for bees in a meter box? Let someone else handle it. Sure, you can get a bee suit and power through the job at hand, but maybe there's an apiarist, a beekeeper, that would be more than happy to safely remove them...and maybe you can score some local honey in the process.



Need to find a water line? Try the water dowsing method, commonly called water witching. Using two locator flags, (remove the flags) bend to resemble the letter L. Hold the smaller ends loosely in each hand with the longer ends pointing straight out. Start walking in the general area the water line is located and the metal sticks will turn into each other when you are on top of a water line.