



Questions and Answers *about your new water and sewer charges*

Effective July 1, 2007

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Update: Phase 4

Starting July 1, 2007, your water and sewer bill will reflect new rates for water and wastewater services for the period July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008. A residential customer's typical monthly bill during this period will increase to \$53.31, an increase of \$2.14. These new rates are the fourth of a four-phase change to rates, spread over a three and a half-year period.

The first-phase of the rate changes were applied February 1, 2005 through July 31, 2005. The second-phase of the rate changes were applied August 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006. The third-phase of the rate changes were applied July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007.

What's in my bill?

Your monthly bill has two parts. One is the usage charge, which is based upon the amount of water used and wastewater produced, as measured by the water meter.

The other part is the monthly service charge, based on the size of the water meter. The service charge is the cost of basic service, which includes stormwater collection and treatment as well as metering, billing, and collecting revenues.

The July bill of the Phase 4 rate change is higher than future bills under Phase 4. The July bill includes an adjustment for the three-month advance service charge. Your August bill, and those following, will be lower because they will be based on a standard one-month service charge. Our long-standing practice of maintaining a three-month reserve of the monthly service charge remains the same. As in the past, updating the reserve takes place with the first billing under new rates; in this case, your July bill.

Most customers, including households and small businesses, have a 5/8-inch size meter.

Sample of Current Typical Monthly Bill for Homeowners

Usage Charge + Service Charge = Monthly Bill

If a customer uses 800 cubic feet (cf) or 6,000 gallons of water as measured by the meter, the usage charge would equal:

Water Usage 800 cf x \$21.80 /1000 cf = \$17.44
 Wastewater Usage 800 cf x \$17.72/1000 cf = \$14.18
Total Usage Charge \$31.62

The service charge for a 5/8-inch meter would equal:
 (See table below for allocation between water and sewer charges.)

Stormwater Collection and Treatment \$9.12
 Billing and Collecting Costs \$10.06
 Metering Costs \$2.22
 Industrial Waste Control \$0.29
Total Service Charge \$21.69

Total Monthly Bill \$31.62 + \$21.69 = \$53.31
 (includes Usage and Service Charges)

Monthly Service Charges

Meter Size (Inches)	Meter Code	Monthly Water Charge	Monthly Sewer Charge	Combined Monthly Charge
5/8	R	\$ 5.10	\$ 16.59	\$ 21.69
3/4	Z	\$ 5.91	\$ 86.24	\$ 92.15
1	Q	\$ 7.88	\$ 140.01	\$ 147.89
1-1/2	P	\$ 12.29	\$ 273.41	\$ 285.70
2	X	\$ 18.22	\$ 434.70	\$ 452.92
3	O	\$ 31.33	\$ 809.69	\$ 841.02
4	W	\$ 54.53	\$ 1,353.88	\$ 1,408.41
6	N	\$ 105.58	\$ 2,701.17	\$ 2,806.75
8	V	\$ 164.76	\$ 4,313.96	\$ 4,478.72
10	E	\$ 239.01	\$ 6,205.43	\$ 6,444.44
12	T	\$ 418.94	\$11,548.42	\$11,967.36

Quantity Charges

Monthly Water Charge	Water Service Charge per Mcf	Monthly Water Usage	Wastewater Services Charge per Mcf
First 2 Mcf	\$21.80	All billable water usage	\$17.72
Next 98 Mcf	\$17.27		
Next 1,900 Mcf	\$15.36		
Next 2,000 Mcf	\$11.50		

Wastewater Surcharges

Biochemical Oxygen Demand = \$0.270 per pound of Biochemical Oxygen Demand in excess of 250 mg/l

Suspended Solids = \$0.247 per pound of suspended solids in excess of 350 mg/l

1 Mcf = 1,000 cubic feet = 7,480 gallons

mg/l = milligrams per liter

Are discounts still available?

Yes. Qualifying seniors, 65 years of age or older, can receive a 25 percent discount, and the income test to qualify for this discount is \$26,700. The same discount applies to charities, churches, non-profit hospitals, schools and universities.

What initiatives are being undertaken by the Water Department to improve its water main system and to protect our drinking water sources from pollution?

Over the past two years, we have described many of our new projects and programs. These initiatives are dedicated to controlling costs while protecting our water sources and improving our water main system.

Pilot Plants

We are able to stay one step ahead of state and federal drinking water regulations thanks to our pilot plant research program. The pilot plants work as miniature water treatment plants where we can look at the effects of different water treatment processes. By studying the results from our pilot plants, we are able to decide which processes give us the best results at the best cost.

RiverCast

We are proud that our rivers are cleaner today than thirty years ago. Philadelphians now boat, fish, and row in our rivers. We post information on the Schuylkill River everyday on our RiverCast web site (www.phillyrivercast.org). Similar to a weather forecast, RiverCast is an internet-based system that provides the public with hourly updates of expected concentrations of fecal coliform bacteria in the Schuylkill River.

Restoring Our Waterways

Cars, shopping carts, trash: all things that do not belong in our rivers and streams. For the past several years, our Waterways Restoration Team has been devoted to removing tons of unwanted and unsightly items from waterways and surrounding banks. This debris not only looks unattractive but can cause flow problems in our waterways and stormwater sewers.

GIS: Geographical Information System

Many people now use GIS systems in their cars and boats for directions. We use GIS to help us manage our huge infrastructure. GIS locates specific buildings or intersections, fire hydrants, water and sewer mains, other utility lines such as electric and gas, and many additional elements of a complex urban area.

How do Philadelphia's rates compare nationally and locally?

Our rates will still be among the lowest in the region after the rate change. Nationally, we are about in the middle when compared with similar urban utilities.

How are water and sewer rates set?

The mayor, city council president and city controller appoint an independent hearing officer who presides over the hearings and sets the time, place and number of hearings. The public hearings for the current rate changes were held in the spring of 2005. The public was invited to attend the formal hearings or offer comments at that time.

The hearing officer submitted his report and recommendations to the water commissioner who determines the rates. The hearing officer can also recommend that the department take specific actions. The hearing officer recommended, and the water commissioner adopted, a four-phase change to rates over a three and a half-year period, from February 1, 2005 to June 30, 2008.

Are assistance programs still available for customers who can't afford to pay their water and sewer bills?

Low-income customers in danger of shut-off can still apply to the Water Revenue Bureau for the Water Revenue Assistance Program. They can receive grants up to \$200 to pay water bills and get help in obtaining federal energy assistance.

For more information about the Water Revenue Assistance Program, please call 215-686-6880.

Other Resources

For information about your water and sewer bill and payment assistance programs, call Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.: 215-686-6880

To order a copy of "Know Your Rights as a Residential Water and Sewer Customer" call: 215-686-6880

All residential properties must have an automatic meter reading device. If an automatic meter reading device has not been installed in your property, please call: 215-685-6300

For water and sewer emergencies, call 24 hours a day: 215-685-6300

Payment and Customer Service Locations

Payments by Mail

Water Revenue Bureau
P.O. Box 41496
Phila., PA 19101-1496

In-Person Authorized Payment Centers*

Center City Philadelphia
Municipal Services Building
1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd. • Concourse Level
Office Hours:
Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Northeast Philadelphia
Northeast Shopping Mall
9129 E. Roosevelt Blvd.
Office Hours:
Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

North Philadelphia
Hope Plaza • 22nd and Somerset Sts.
Office Hours:
Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

*The Water Revenue Bureau is not responsible for payments made at any location other than the authorized payment locations listed above.



If you would like more information about other Water Department projects, please call us at 215-685-6300 or visit our website at www.phila.gov/water