

# How to read your water bill

Water bills can sometimes be confusing to residents. There are four cost components for each water bill. First is total water used. The second is sewer volume, the third is the Surface Water Conversion (SWC) fee (formerly the GRP fee) and fourth is the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) fee. Here’s a way to figure out your water bill:

The first thing one has to know is that there is a base charge for fixed expenses related to water and sewer service availability. That charge is \$5.00 for water and \$10.50 for sewer. This is a fixed monthly charge which all residential customers pay.

Next come “tiers”, or what is referred to in the water industry as an inclining block rate (the rate increase is based on higher volume use). These tiers are designed to encourage water use efficiency and cover increased costs required to meet higher volume demands, usually in summer months. (Please see chart for a list of tiers and charges).

The charge for usage between 1,000 gallons and 3,000 gallons is \$1.70 per 1,000 gallons. If a resident uses 3,000 gallons, the water charge would be  $\$1.70 \times 3 = \$5.10$ . Add the base charge of \$5.00 and the resident’s retail water-use component of the bill would be \$10.10.

Sewer costs must also be added. Currently, 10 of the 11 MUDs served by The Woodlands Joint Powers Agency (WJPA), have a base charge of \$10.50 (that includes up to 3,000 gallons usage; higher volumes are \$4.50 per 1,000 gallons.) A resident who uses 3,000 gallons would pay \$24.00 in sewer charges. The bill now comes to \$28.41.\*

The third charge is the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality charge, which is \$0.005 times the sewer and water charge ( $\$28.41 \times \$0.005 = \$0.14$ ). The bill is now at \$28.55.

<b>Effective October 2015 – Residential Water and Sewer Rates</b>			
<b>Tier</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Sewer*</b>	<b>Sewer*(Mud 36 only)</b>
	Base charge \$5.00	Base charge \$10.50	Base charge \$20.50
<b>1,000-3,000 gallons</b>	<b>\$1.70/1,000 gallons</b>	<b>\$4.50/1,000 gallons</b>	<b>\$3.50 /1,000 gallons</b>
<b>4,000-15,000 gallons</b>	<b>\$2.80/1,000 gallons</b>		
<b>16,000-30,000 gallons</b>	<b>\$4.45/1,000 gallons</b>		
<b>31,000 or more</b>	<b>\$5.80/1,000 gallons</b>		
<b>*Sewer base rate includes first 3,000 gallons. Monthly sewer volume capped on average winter use.</b>			
<b>Texas Commission on Environmental Quality charge \$0.005 X combined water and sewer charge</b>			
<b>Surface Water Conversion fee (formerly GRP fee) \$2.47/1,000 gallons</b>			

The final charge on the bill is the Surface Water Conversion fee, which is currently \$2.47 per thousand gallons. A resident who uses 3,000 gallons would pay \$7.41, which brings the bill to \$35.96.

However, if the resident uses 6,000 gallons, 3,000 of those gallons move into the next tier, which charges \$2.80 per 1,000 gallons. Then their water charge would be \$18.54. That includes the base charge plus \$1.70 per gallon for the first 3,000 gallons of water, plus \$2.80 for 3,000 gallons in the next tier. Add the sewer base (\$10.50) plus 3000 gallons at \$4.50 per gallon and the sewer component is \$24.00. The total bill goes up to \$42.54. The TCEQ fee is \$0.21, which brings the bill to \$42.75. Add to this the Surface Water Conversion Fee of \$2.47 per 1,000 gallons ( $\$2.47 \times 4$ ) and the total bill will be \$52.63.

## **Tips for lowering your water bill**

Conserving water during the winter months will establish a cap on sewer volumes for the coming summer months. Summer sewer volume is based on average water use during December, January and February. For instance if a resident used 16,000 gallons of water during August, but their average usage during the three winter months was only 4,000 gallons, then that resident would be charged no more than 4,000 gallons of sewer per month during the rest of the year.

Residents should not irrigate during the winter. That means not over seeding with winter rye. Winter rye needs a lot of water to survive, but this boosts water usage during the winter, making average sewer rates higher.

Install drip irrigation in ornamental beds. It's inexpensive and easy to install. And it saves a lot of water. Plant more native plants and plants which are adapted to our region. These plants generally can exist on much less water than exotics.

**Remember that the Odd/Even Defined Irrigation Schedule is still in effect for all 11 MUDs served by the WJPA.**

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