



# Questions and Answers

## about your new water and sewer charges

Effective August 1, 2005

Para recibir una copia de este folleto en espanol llame al 215-685-6300.

### Update: Phase 2

Starting August 1, 2005, your water and sewer bill will reflect new rates for water and wastewater services for the period August 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006.

These new rates are the second of a four-phase change to rates to be spread over a three and a half-year period. The first-phase change to rates were implemented February 1, 2005 to July 31, 2005.

A residential customer's typical monthly bill will increase to \$47.97, an increase of \$0.88.

### Typical Residential Customer Monthly Billings

Period	Additional Monthly Water & Sewer Charge	Total Monthly Bill
First Phase: 2/1/05 to 7/31/05	\$5.33	\$47.09
Second Phase: 8/1/05 to 6/30/06	\$0.88	\$47.97
Third Phase: 7/1/06 to 6/30/07	\$3.20	\$51.17
Fourth Phase: 7/1/07 and forward	\$2.14	\$53.31

### Wastewater Surcharges

**Biochemical Oxygen Demand** = \$0.247 per pound of Biochemical Oxygen Demand in excess of 250 mg/l

**Suspended Solids** = 0.235 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

### Other Resources

For information about your water and sewer bill and payment assistance programs, call Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.: **215-686-6880**

To order a copy of "Know Your Rights as a Residential Water and Sewer Customer": **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.

For a current list of all In-Person Authorized Payment Centers, please call 215-686-6880.

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



### 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 \$19.91 /1000 cf = \$15.93  
Wastewater Usage 800 cf x \$15.99/1000 cf = \$12.79  
Total Usage Charge \$28.72

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 \$8.39  
Billing and Collecting Costs \$8.84  
Metering Costs \$1.77  
Industrial Waste Control \$0.25  
Total Service Charge \$19.25

Total Monthly Bill \$28.72 + \$19.25 = \$47.97 (includes Usage and Service Charges)

### Quantity Charges

Monthly Water Charge	Water Service Charge per Mcf	Monthly Water Usage	Wastewater Services Charge per Mcf
First 2 Mcf	\$19.91	All billable water usage	\$15.99
Next 98 Mcf	\$15.77		
Next 1,900 Mcf	\$14.03		
Next 2,000 Mcf	\$10.50		

#### 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 August bill of the Phase 2 rate change is higher than future bills under Phase 2. The August bill includes an adjustment for the three-month advance service charge. Your September 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 August bill.

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

### Monthly Service Charges

Meter Size (Inches)	Meter Code	Monthly Water Charge	Monthly Sewer Charge	Combined Monthly Charge
5/8	R	\$ 4.12	\$ 15.13	\$ 19.25
3/4	Z	\$ 4.40	\$ 77.13	\$ 81.53
1	Q	\$ 5.32	\$ 125.17	\$ 130.49
1-1/2	P	\$ 7.08	\$ 244.38	\$ 251.46
2	X	\$ 9.85	\$ 388.51	\$ 398.36
3	O	\$ 15.60	\$ 723.62	\$ 739.22
4	W	\$ 28.32	\$ 1,210.02	\$ 1,238.34
6	N	\$ 53.14	\$ 2,414.08	\$ 2,467.22
8	V	\$ 80.76	\$ 3,855.40	\$ 3,936.16
10	E	\$118.31	\$ 5,545.85	\$ 5,664.16
12	T	\$192.72	\$10,320.51	\$10,513.23

## Why the Change in Rates?

New rates are required so the Department can pay for all costs associated with operating a safe, reliable and efficient water and wastewater system. Some of the key costs are associated with:

- Loss of an \$8 million annual state subsidy.
- New and higher standards of environmental regulations for water, wastewater and stormwater treatment.
- Increase in labor costs.
- Higher costs associated with funding our capital program to replace and renew our vast infrastructure in a cost-effective manner.
- Decrease in interest income.
- Decrease in customer base.

Under the Philadelphia City Charter and various bond covenants with investors, the Water Department is not allowed to operate with a deficit. Our rates and revenues must be sufficient to enable us to meet all of our financial requirements. Without these new rates, we would be unable to meet our legal requirements.

## How is the money that customers pay each month for their water and sewer bills used by the Water Department?

In your February 2005 bill, we provided information on the measures we have taken to control costs. Here are a few of the major initiatives that we are doing to protect your drinking water, to maintain the structural integrity of the city's sewer system, and to reduce pollution from combined sewer overflows to local rivers and streams:

• **Pilot Plant Research:** We are conducting research at two pilot plants, one for the treatment of drinking water withdrawn from the Delaware River, the other from the Schuylkill. Before investing in major capital improvements at our plants, research provides a better understanding of how changes to treatment processes will impact operations. This research helps us to meet future regulatory mandates that protect public health, in a cost-effective way, well ahead of federal deadlines.

• **On-line Drinking Water Quality Monitoring System:** Each day, our Bureau of Laboratory Services samples drinking water from numerous locations throughout Philadelphia and collects hundreds of samples each month to assure the delivery of high quality drinking water. In response to heightened security concerns, we are implementing a real-time monitoring system at our water treatment plants, reservoirs, pumping stations, and at numerous points throughout our water distribution system. This technology is vital to the utmost safety of water quality and the health of our customers.

• **Early Warning System:** During the past year, we implemented a system to further protect our drinking water sources from chemical spills and other potential hazards. This project, funded in part by a \$725,000 grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, will help us when making critical treatment and pumping decisions in response to spills and accidents.

Recent events, including the major oil spill on the Delaware this past fall, a tanker car derailment of hazardous materials along the banks of the Schuylkill, and a fire at a Bridgeport, Pennsylvania chemical plant, have emphasized the need to improve coordination among utilities. This state-of-the art Early Warning System has already increased communication

among water suppliers up and down the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers.

• **New Pumping Station:** For several years we have been gearing up for the construction of a new pumping station to enhance local water pressure and service reliability for our customers in the Northwest section of the City. This new station will house eight energy-efficient pumps, a control room and offices.

• **Sewer Infrastructure Assessment Program:** Maintaining our sewer system is equally important to us. The heavy rains we experienced this last summer were highly unusual for Philadelphia, and they greatly impacted our sewers in several neighborhoods. That's why it's important for us to continue a sewer assessment program we began more than a year and a half ago. With nearly 3,000 miles of sewers collecting nearly 500 million gallons of wastewater a day, assessing the conditions of our sewers is a major part of our operations. During the past year, we videotaped and evaluated nearly 230 miles of sewers. Based on the information we obtained during this initial assessment, we are developing a database and ranking system so we can prioritize improvements to our sewers. And, we will continue to assess additional miles of sewers each year.

If you would like more information about other projects that we are undertaking, please call us at 215-685-6300, or visit our website at [www.phila.gov/water](http://www.phila.gov/water)

## 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 this spring. 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 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.

## 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.