



Customer Service Connections

A publication of Saint Paul Regional Water Services

FALL 2012

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Protect Your Pipes From Freezing

Do You Winter Elsewhere? Have Your Water Shut Off Here

To Serve You Better

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Proposed changes to water charges

Water service base fee and water usage to determine cost

The water utility is restructuring the way water charges are determined.

Water charges have traditionally been based on the amount of water used, with a minimum charge for six units of water.

The Board of Water Commissioners is proposing that a water service base fee be implemented in addition to the water usage charge beginning in 2013.

The minimum charge for six units would be eliminated.

Water usage charges would go down in 2013, from \$2.52 a unit to \$2.39 per unit in the summer, and from \$2.42 a unit to \$2.29 per unit in the winter.*

Most residential customers would pay \$3/month or \$9/quarter for the water service base fee.

Water usage charges based upon actual water consumption would be added to the base fee to come up with a total charge.

To see how that would affect a typical SPRWS residential customer that uses 22 units of water per quarter, please see the above charts.

Typical residential customer using 22 units per quarter

WATER CHARGES IN 2012*	QTR 1	QTR 2	QTR 3	QTR 4	Annual Cost
Winter rate (\$2.42/unit x 22)	\$53.24	\$53.24			
Summer rate (\$2.52/unit x 22)			\$55.44	\$55.44	
Total	\$53.24	\$53.24	\$55.44	\$55.44	\$217.36
SAINT PAUL ONLY					
ROW Recovery Fee	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$4.50	
Total	\$57.74	\$57.74	\$59.94	\$59.94	\$235.36

Typical residential customer using 22 units per quarter

WATER CHARGES IN 2013*	QTR 1	QTR 2	QTR 3	QTR 4	Annual Cost
Winter rate (\$2.29/unit x 22)	\$50.38	\$50.38			
Summer rate (\$2.39/unit x 22)			\$52.58	\$52.58	
Water Service Base Fee	\$9	\$9	\$9	\$9	
Total	\$59.38	\$59.38	\$61.58	\$61.58	\$241.92
SAINT PAUL ONLY					
ROW Recovery Fee	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$4.50	
Total	\$63.88	\$63.88	\$66.08	\$66.08	\$259.92

The combination of water service base fee and the water usage charge would result in increased water charges of \$6.41 per quarter/ \$24.56 per year.

The service base fee is intended to cover costs unrelated to the volume of water needed to meet customer demand, such as general administration, billing, accounting, customer service, etc.

It also reflects a continuous decrease in water usage that coincides with the need

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*The water service base fee and water usage charges apply to the cities of Saint Paul, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Maplewood and West Saint Paul. All other customers pay 20 percent more.

To Serve You Better

To talk to a **Customer Service Representative** call Customer Service at (651) 266-6350 and press "0" between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday.

Bills may be paid in the following ways:

Credit Card

We accept *Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express* credit/debit cards. To make a credit card payment, or to get information on your account status 24/7, call (651) 266-6350 or go online to: <https://billpay.saintpaulwater.com>. Or pay in person at McCarrons Center, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., 1900 Rice St., Maplewood

Money Order or Check

In person, by return mail with your bill stub, or in one of our drop boxes:

For next-day processing, at McCarrons Center. The drop box is located in the visitor parking area; available 24 hours a day.

For 48-hour processing, located at Saint Paul City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd., West. Doors are open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and visitors must pass through security.

Cash

In person only, at McCarrons Center, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Direct Payment Plan

Have your payment deducted electronically from your checking or savings account. You'll still receive a statement; it will indicate which date the payment will be deducted from your account.

Do you winter in another residence?

If you spend your winter months at a second residence and leave your property here vacant, you might consider having your water turned off during your absence.

If your heat goes out and your home is vacant, water pipes can freeze and burst. If the home thaws out, the water can cause considerable damage before you return home.

If you are interested in having your water shut off for the winter months, contact dispatch at 651-266-6868.

Base fee plus water use equal costs

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to replace infrastructure that was installed more than 100 years ago.

From 2007 to 2010, the utility witnessed a 13 percent drop in water usage, to levels that were last seen in 1962. While water use is at historical lows, the infrastructure system of water mains, towers, tanks, and reservoirs that store and deliver the water is more extensive than in the past, and in need of repair and replacement.

A public hearing on the water service base fee, water usage charges, and the 2013 proposed budget was held on September 11 at the Saint Paul Regional Water Services offices on Rice Street.

The Board recommended the proposed budget and charges be forwarded to the Saint Paul City

Water Service Base Fees*

Meter Size	Fee Per Billing Period
Smaller than 1"	\$9/quarter
1"	\$22.50/quarter
1.5" (Residential)	\$45/quarter
1.5" (Commercial)	\$15/month
2"	\$24/month
3"	\$48/month
4"	\$75/month
6"	\$150/month
8"	\$240/month
10"	\$345/month

Council for consideration.

The city council will host public hearings on the overall budget, including the utility budget, in early November and vote in December.

Keep your pipes from freezing

Every winter hundreds of water meters and pipes freeze in area homes. Make sure that doesn't happen to you.

Water meters typically sit several inches off the floor in the basements of most homes.

If the meter is in a pit in your home, make sure that the cover fits properly. The pipes, valves, and water meter in the pit should not touch the concrete walls, where it is colder.

In addition:

- Check along the foundation and crawl spaces for cold-air leaks
- Close off crawl space vents
- Replace or repair broken or cracked basement windows
- Make sure that basement doors and windows close tightly
- Seal or caulk cracks in walls

- Insulate pipes
- Make sure the valves on either side of the water meter work and can be turned off

If your water meter freezes, the bottom plate will crack. **Do not try to repair the meter yourself; call us.**

It is unlawful for anyone other than a water utility employee to remove a water meter except in cases of an emergency or with a permit by a plumber.

If we need to replace a damaged meter, including damage caused by freezing, the homeowner will be charged for the meter. Replacing a new meter can cost \$300 or more.

If you suspect damaged or frozen water pipes or water meter, call the SPRWS 24-hour dispatch office at 651-266-6868.

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Check your account anytime at billpay.saintpaulwater.com.