



Customer Service *Connections*

A publication of Saint Paul Regional Water Services

Winter 2014

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Contributes to
Appearance of
Cloudy Water**

**How to Read Your
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**To Serve You
Better**

Board of Water Commissioners

*(*As of Dec. 31, 2013, Bykowski's term ends and a new commissioner will be appointed in January 2014.)*

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Customer Service

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New water charges in effect for 2014

2.14 percent increase in volume usage charge, no base rate increase

Your water bill should reflect a \$0.05* per billing unit increase starting this quarter. Water volume charges are now \$2.34* during the winter months and \$2.44* per unit during the summer months.

The Board of Water Commissioners passed a 2.14 percent increase in water volume charges (usage charges) for 2014, with no increase in base rate fees. The Saint Paul city council approved the change at the December council meeting.

The end result will be a \$4.40 per year increase in overall water charges for a typical family using 22 units of water per quarter.

Residential customers with meters less than an inch in size will continue to pay \$3/month or \$9/quarter for the

water service base fee.

Most of the increase in usage charges will go toward capital improvements to repair, replace, and maintain our water distribution and storage system.

We are planning to replace 9 miles of water main, 800 water connections, and 150 fire hydrants in 2014. This includes replacing cast iron water mains within residential street improvement projects.

In addition, we are making necessary improvements to our water towers, tanks, and reservoirs.

Please note that the changes in the sewer rates are determined by your local municipality, and in Saint Paul, the public works department. Please contact the agency listed on the back of your bill for more information on sewer and other charges not related to water usage.

**For the cities of Saint Paul, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Maplewood and West Saint Paul. All other communities pay 20% more.*

Keep your pipes from freezing this winter

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
- Make sure the valves on either side of the water meter work and can be turned off
- Seal or caulk cracks in walls

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Our mission is to provide reliable, quality water and services at a reasonable cost.

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.

How to read your meter

Your water meter is located inside your home, generally about one foot off of the floor in your basement. It could also be in a crawl space, pit in the floor, or utility room.

The water usually comes in through the street side of the house. The meter sits on a water pipe that comes through the floor.

The head of the meter is about three inches in diameter. It has an LED box for displaying numbers.

You will need to activate the LED by shining a flashlight. Read all nine numbers from left to right.

Winter cold contributes to appearance of cloudy water

In the winter months, many people notice a milky or cloudy appearance to their tap water. This is caused by air bubbles trapped in the water. It is harmless and will disappear on its own if left out for a few minutes.

This phenomenon occurs more often in the winter due to the colder temperatures. Cold water can trap and hold larger amounts of dissolved oxygen than warm water. Most of our water comes from the Mississippi River, which then travels through a chain of lakes before arriving at our plant. This surface water is much colder in the winter months. Not only is the water cold coming into our treatment plant, but the pipes that deliver the water to your home from the plant are cold as well.

In addition, water in the pipe is under pressure. That pressure makes it impossible for the air in

the water to get out while it is still in the pipes. Once it comes out of your faucet, it is no longer pressurized and the air begins to escape, like opening a pop can. The warmer room temperature also contributes to the release of air bubbles, as warmer water cannot hold as much air. As the air escapes and the bubbles rise to the surface, it looks cloudy. Sometimes there are enough bubbles that it looks like there is debris or small particles swirling around your glass. As the air dissipates, the water clears from the bottom of the glass to the top. Bubbles may attach to the sides of the glass as the water clears.

Trapping air is a natural phenomenon associated with cold water, and it does not affect water quality. If you have questions or concerns, you can always call our office at 651-266-6350.

Keep your pipes from freezing

Pipes continued from page 1

- Insulate pipes

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.

If you plan on vacating the home for the winter, consider having the water shut off for those months.

The heat can go out and the water pipes can freeze, bursting if the water pipes then thaw out in warmer temps.

To prevent this kind of damage, call our dispatch office at 651-266-6868 to have the water shut off during the winter months.

**Check your account anytime at billpay.saintpaulwater.com.
You can pay your bill and see trends in your water use.**