



City of Richmond Michigan

With Time for You • Since 1879



WATER AND SEWER BILLING FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Question: *How is the amount of my water and sewer bill determined?*

Answer: Water and sewer service is billed on the basis of actual usage as measured by your water meter. Once every three months a city meter reader visits your property to obtain a current water meter reading. By taking this reading and subtracting the meter reading from the previous quarter, we are able to determine how much water was consumed for the period. The city's water meters register water usage in tens, hundreds and thousand gallons.

Question: *How is this money used?*

Answer: How does the city use the money collected from water and sewer charges? Money collected from water and sewer fees is accounted for separately from other city funds and is used only for the operation, maintenance and capital replacement needs of the water and sewer systems. The city's water and sewer systems are each operated as self-sufficient entities supported only by the fees paid by users and not by general tax dollars.

Question: *What if I don't pay in time?*

Answer: Each water bill you receive from the city specifies a due date for payment. Failure to make payment within 30 days of this due date results in an immediate penalty of 10% which is added to the amount due. If the bill remains unpaid, the city then sends a reminder, giving an additional 30 days with a shut off date. If this is done, an additional charge of \$40.00 is imposed to reinstate service. Finally, state law and city ordinance provide that unpaid water bills are the responsibility of the property owner and may be liened against the property in the same manner as property taxes.

Question: *How can I determine if I have a water leak?*

Answer: Many water leaks are obvious: dripping faucets, leaking pipes, leaking hot water tanks, or stuck relief valves on hot water tanks and boilers. These leaks should be fixed as soon as possible since even a slow dripping faucet can waste large amounts of water in a very short time. Concealed leaks in walls or ceilings can be detected by the presence of water or stains on walls or on the floor of the basement. The most common location of water leaks is the toilet. Defective ball cock valves or poorly fitting seals will allow water to continually flow from the tank into the toilet bowl. Very often this type of leak cannot be noticed by the naked eye. Placing a few drops of food coloring in the toilet tank can help you detect leaks. Let the water sit for several hours without flushing. If the water in the toilet bowl becomes tinted, the toilet is leaking. If you suspect you have a water leak but are unable to detect it on your own, you can request assistance from the city's Water Maintenance Department. To schedule a leak inspection appointment, you should call 727-7571. There is no charge for this service.

Question: *Is it necessary to go to City Hall to sign up for, or discontinue, service?*

Answer: No. However, because unpaid water and sewer charges constitute a tax lien against the property and its owner, all service changes need to be acknowledged and signed for by the property owner. If you are discontinuing service, please call for a final water meter reading and billing. This will be mailed out or you may pick it up. Requests for a final meter reading must be made with 24 hours advance notice.

Question: *What should I do in case of a water emergency?*

Answer: If you have an emergency situation, you should contact the Richmond Department of Public Works at 727-7575. After regular working hours, you should call Richmond Police Department at 727-7545.