

Helpful Hints Regarding City of Flint Water Service

Water and sewer service is very important to residents and, unfortunately, costly. Monitoring your water usage can avoid unnecessarily and unexpected high bills. Some assistance may be available if you are experiencing financial difficulties in paying your bills and this can help avoid the inconvenience of having your water shut off.

Here are a few frequently asked questions regarding the City's water and sewer billing:

How can I monitor my water usage?

- 1) The City of Flint bills for water/sewer service monthly. The City is divided into eight districts for residential billing. Each meter in the districts is read using a transponder that sends a signal to the street that is picked up by a receiver inside a City vehicle. The reads are sent to the Water Billing department to check for accuracy and to process the bills. The due dates for these districts are the 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th of each month, depending on the location in the City.
- 2) The water/sewer billings are always in the arrears, usually one to two months. For example, if your due date is 7/14/12, the bill will be sent to you by 7/1/12 (14 days prior to the due date) and it would be for the usage of 5/14 – 6/13.
- 3) The bill contains all of the information you will need to monitor your usage. The key indicator of usage on the bill is the Number of Units used. You can compare this to average consumption data to determine if you may have leakage.
- 4) The average monthly water consumption in the City is 7 units of water. Each unit is equal to 748 gallons. Depending on the size of the household and usage patterns, water consumption can run from between 1 – 3 units for single households and seniors to 13 – 15 units for a large family. While there are many factors which may cause your water usage to be more or less than the averages, it is a good idea to check for possible leakages if your consumption is consistently above the averages, or if there is an unusual spike in water consumption. Leaking toilets is one of the most common causes of increased water usage. Other factors may be broken lines or faucets leaking or not turned off completely.

What do I do if I suspect a problem, or having inspected for a leak, cannot find any, and yet I experience unusually high consumption?

- 5) If you suspect a problem with your meter, call the Customer Service Center at (810) 766-7015 to set up an appointment for a meter inspection.
- 6) The meter is equipped with a small dial on its face that will spin when water is flowing. This dial is called a leak detector. If the water is off in the house and this dial is moving, you have a leak.
- 7) The City of Flint does not have a licensed plumber on staff to check for or repair leaks inside the home. Water customers are responsible for maintenance of all plumbing in the premises including connection to the water mains or sewer lines.

What do I do if I believe I am being charged for more water than I use, or I have some other problem with my bill?

- 8) If a customer disputes their water/sewer bill and is unable to resolve the issue with Customer Service personnel, the customer may request an Administrative Review. The customer will be given an Administrative Review form to complete and a chance to submit additional documentation to support their case. The Treasurer will review the form and documentation to make the final decision.
- 9) The Ordinance allows for an adjustment to the bill based on the following, per section 46-17 (c), "The referee may approve an adjustment in the consumer's water bill providing it is shown to his satisfaction from investigation by the Department of Water Supply or Building and Safety Inspections Division that a leak occurred due to the non negligence of the consumer, in plumbing of the consumer which resulted in an unusually large bill without the knowledge of the consumer, and where the consumer took immediate steps to repair the plumbing defect causing the leak. The basis of such adjustment shall be 50% of the excess to be absorbed by the customer, 50% by the City."

What happens if I don't pay my bill?

- 10) Water/sewer bills become delinquent 30 days after the due date and are subject to a penalty of 1.5% per month on the unpaid balance. The City will also terminate water service on delinquent bills (City ordinance 46-52 (h)).
- 11) Turn-off notices may be issued when a bill is delinquent after 30 days, if no prior arrangements have been made with the Customer Service Center.

- 12) Turn-off notices are mailed to delinquent customers fifteen (15) days before the turn-off date. Once the customer receives the notice, we do not hold the account for agencies unless they will guarantee payment in writing. DHS will issue an 849 form indicating the amount they will pay to assist the customer.
- 13) Non-payment turn-offs are done only Monday through Thursday. The Customer Service Center does not schedule non-payment turn-offs on Friday, Saturdays, Sundays, or most recognized holidays. Illegal usage, broken payment arrangements and NSF (non-sufficient funds) turn offs are done at any time without additional notice.

What should I do if I am unable to pay my bill?

- 14) Payment plans are available to all customers if they are having trouble paying their bill on time. We will accept 50% of the account balance down and set up a payment arrangement on the balance which will be required to be paid off within 6 months.
- 15) If you need additional help with paying your bill, contact DHS and pick up a list of agencies that assist with utility bills from the Customer Service Center. You must get a decision notice from DHS before the other agencies will help you with your utility bill.

Does the City offer an adjustment on the sewer charge when filling a pool or watering the grass.

- 16) The city does not offer an adjustment if you use the system to fill your pool or for irrigation. However, depending on the size of the pool, it may be less expensive than trucking the water in.
- 17) If you have a sprinkler system or just using a large amount of water for irrigation, it may be beneficial to put in a second meter for outside water usage. You will not be charged a sewer rate on the second meter. Contact the Customer Service Center for more details.
- 18) All usage must be billed. Section 46-50 (b) states; “No free service shall be furnished by the system to the city or to any person, firm or corporation, public or private, or to any agency or instrumentality.”