



WATER DEPARTMENT

Information Helpful to You

How do you calculate my water bill?

Water bills are determined by the amount of water that passes through your water meter multiplied by the current water and sewer rates. For example, if you receive a bill and in the "used" column you were billed for 25 units of water, we would calculate your bill as follows:

25×3.12 (water rate, WT on your bill) = 78.00

25×5.92 (sewer rate, SW on your bill) = 148.00

Typical Meter Charge (MT, on your bill) = 4.75 varies by size

Garbage/ Rubbish Charge (GW, on your bill) = 29.31

TOTAL \$260.06

Why is the sewer portion of my bill so high?

When looking at your bill, you will see the rate used for sewer is almost double the rate for water. We take your consumption and multiply

it by the sewer rate to determine your charge. In addition to your water rates, sewer charges contain certain fees that pay for maintenance of pumping stations, drains, treatment of sewer water, and proper disposal of waste water. Because of this, your sewer rate is increased.

Am I eligible for a payment plan for my water bill?

Payment plans are available in the water department. You should first speak to an associate to determine if you qualify. Often times, a sufficient payment will satisfy your account and no formal plan would be needed. If a plan is offered to you, the terms are as follows: 25% of your total balance must be paid as a down payment. The remaining balance will be divided into 5 equal monthly payments. During the 5 months that you are on your plan, any new bill or penalty issued to your account must be paid in full, on time, and in addition to your monthly payment. Unlike a budget plan, new bills are separate and not rolled into your monthly amounts. This plan is designed to have your account current and at a zero balance at the conclusion of your plan.

How do I know if my bill is estimated?

If there is an **E** printed in the **EST** column on your bill, your usage was estimated. Batteries on outside reading devices can sometimes need replacements or the devices can require upgrades. Because of the high volume of replacements, new products on back-order, and

limited available staff, some bills do receive estimated reads. If you receive an estimated bill, you have the option to contact us to request an actual read.

Suddenly I have received a high bill, what could be the cause?

When you receive your bill, be sure to check for estimates. Consecutive estimated bills could result in under billing and once an actual read is obtained, all of your unbilled usage will be applied to that bill resulting in a higher than normal bill. It is advised to periodically check for leaks. **Leaking faucets and running toilets are usually the culprits, especially basement toilets.** Sudden high bills can be a result of underestimates, undetected leaks, or a combination of both. Also, be sure to check the usage dates printed on your bill. Since we bill in arrears, you are likely paying for water you began using three months ago. Remembering this bit of information will help you prepare for your summer bill, which is usually your highest bill.

How can I monitor my water usage and check my leak detector?

The red diamond or triangle on the face of your meter is your leak detector and only spins/agitates when water is passing through it. To check, shut all faucets off and do not flush toilets immediately before checking. At this point, your detector should be still. If it is moving, you are losing water somewhere. Another way to check your meter is to write

the numbers from your meter down before leaving for work. If, upon returning home, the numbers have changed, you could have a leak. You can also do this before bedtime and check the numbers the next morning.

My neighbor has more people living in their home than I do and their bill is less than mine, how is that?

We often hear residents say that they've compared their bills to their neighbors. This is **not** an accurate way to gauge your water bill usage. Although your neighbor could have more people living in their home, their water habits/usage can be completely different. For instance, they could only take baths or have newer/different appliances (i.e. dishwasher, washing machine). There are several variables that cause differences between you and your neighbor's bills so it is best monitor your usage and take measures to use less.

What is a Final Bill and when should I request one?

Final bills are special billings done per request when property changes possession. They are essential when either moving into or out of a property. Final bills provide you with a bill that will verify what charges belong to you and what was incurred prior to your occupancy. This is ideal if you are moving into a home and need to forward old charges to landlords or agents.

I am a landlord, how can I make sure my tenants pay their water bill?

For landlords, it is a good idea to have duplicate bills sent to your home or office. By doing so, you are able to check for any previous unpaid balances and keep up with the current amounts owing.

I am a tenant, how can I make sure I am not paying for a previous tenant's usage?

Requesting a final bill is important when moving into a new home. You can contact the Water Department to schedule a meter read and we will bill the account up to the day the read is taken. It is ideal to have the read done as close as possible to the date you are moving in so that you are able to separate your new charges from any previous balances. Speak with your landlord to determine who will be responsible for payment of any final bills.

How do I obtain a print-out of my water bill?

Due to the overwhelming requests for print-outs, we require a \$1.00 per page fee for copies as this requires extra processing time and additional paper use. We apologize for any inconvenience this might cause and appreciate your cooperation.

What should I do, I haven't received a water bill?

We understand that sometimes things get lost. This could be during delivery or it could have possibly just been overlooked. Because of this, it is a good idea to know the four months per

year in which you receive bills. If you haven't received a bill during your billing month, contact the water department to receive your balance. Alternatively, balances are available online. Visit us at www.ci.oak-park.mi.us and click on the Finance Department. Not receiving a bill does not release you from the responsibility of paying.

TIPS YOU CAN USE

- ✓ Running toilets & dripping faucets cost! Check often for leaks!
- ✓ Check leak detectors often. Catching a leak early, can save you money!
- ✓ Instead of waiting for a three month bill, try pre-paying. Choose your own amount, send us a payment, and we'll apply it to your account. By the time your three month bill is issued, you will have already paid towards it!
- ✓ Shorten shower times when possible and turn off water while brushing your teeth. This could help lower your usage while also preserving water for our environment.



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