METERS AND BILLING

HOW YOUR RESIDENTIAL WATER CONSUMPTION IS MEASURED AND BILLED

Customer Information Sheet **January 2016**

The City of Buda uses a dual component system to measure and record your water consumption:

- **The residential (mechanical) water meter**
- **The Automated Meter Reading (AMR) System**

These two pieces of equipment work in tandem to record water use data that is used for billing purposes.

How the Residential Meter Works

The residential water meters in Buda are positive displacement type meters. A measured volume of water enters the meter from the service line and exits the meter to your home. As this volume of water passes through the meter, it rotates the internal mechanism that changes the reading on your meter face. If there is no water movement (or positive displacement) through the meter body, the meter reading will not change.

The meter records cumulative water use over the life of the meter like the way an odometer records cumulative mileage on an automobile. As the meter ages, the mechanical components wear and begin to under report water use. This results in less water being billed for than is actually used and is why it is common practice for utilities to replace meters at regular intervals. Other conditions can occur (such as debris entering the meter) that cause the internal mechanism to seize up. When this happens, water may pass through the meter, but again, use will not be recorded.

The meter reports usage in one gallon increments.

*The **City of Buda** is proud to supply our customers with safe drinking water at an affordable rate. We strive to provide dependable service and timely information that meets our customers' needs. This information sheet includes details on how the City measures residential water use and generates monthly water bills.*

ANATOMY OF A METER

reading face
- provides a running total of usage similar to the way an odometer records mileage

fixed zero
- the value for this reading is provided by the sweep hand

sweep hand
- indicates water usage in 1 gallon increments

flow indicator
- indicates water movement through meter - can be used to check for leaks

Modern water meters are very accurate will not register flow if there is no water use

PUT YOUR METER TO WORK

If you suspect a leak, make sure there is no water use in the house and then monitor your meter's flow indicator.

If the red triangle is rotating, a leak could be present.

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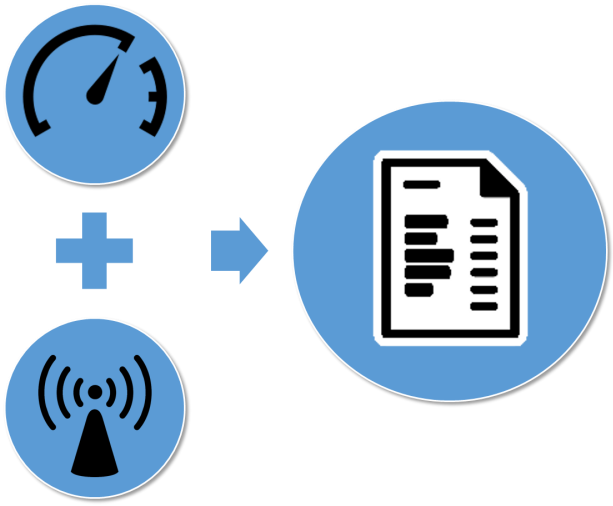


The AMR system converts the meter read to electronic data used for billing

How the AMR System Works

The AMR system converts the mechanical reading from the meter into electronic data which it transmits via radio signal over a fixed communication network. The AMR system reports usage hourly and takes multiple readings per hour for redundancy. Signals from the AMR system can sometimes be blocked by heavy foliage or vehicles parked next to the meter box. If the data is not received from the AMR for an extended period of time it will report the total amount of water used for that time period during the next successful signal transmission. Data from the AMR system is used by the City's billing software to generate the water usage data included in monthly utility bills. If the AMR unit connected to your meter fails completely, the usage data is collected manually from the water meter and used for billing purposes.

The AMR system reports usage in 10 gallon increments.

Tiered rate structure

Water Rates for Fiscal Year 2015 - 2016

Volume Used			Cost per 1,000 gallons	
Tier	From	To	Inside City	Outside City
1	1	6,000	$2.93	$4.12
2	6,001	12,000	$4.62	$6.03
3	12,001	18,000	$6.90	$8.62
4	18,001	24,000	$8.13	$10.01
5	24,001	30,000	$9.86	$11.93
6	30,001	40,000	$12.89	$15.44
7	40,001	>40,001	$13.73	$16.48
* Base Rate			$10.73	$13.42

* Base rates vary based on meter size and customer type. The base rate shown on this table is for a 3/4" residential meter.

Tier	Volume		Cost per 1,000 gallons		
1	6,000 gallons	X	$2.93	=	$17.58
2	5,000 gallons	X	$4.62	=	$23.10
	Total Volume Charge			=	**$40.68**
	Base Rate			=	$10.73
	Total Water Utility Charge			=	**$51.41**

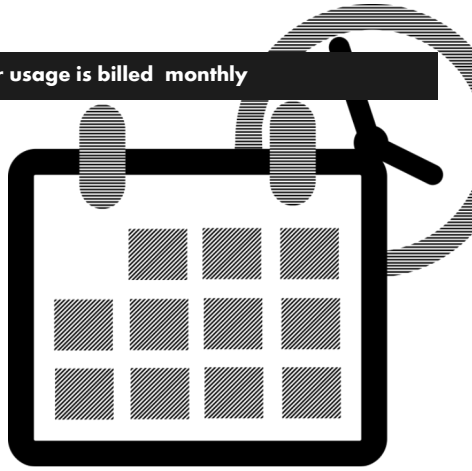
Example billing of 11,000 gallons of water used

The Billing Cycle

Your water usage is billed on a monthly basis and is part of your utility bill which includes fees for other city services such as sewer and trash collection. The billing cycle starts from about the middle of the month to the middle of the following month.

This means that a bill received in September is for water used in August. This can sometimes lead to confusion when customers receive a utility bill and review their water use.

Water usage is billed monthly



Water Rates

There are several components pertaining to water on your monthly utility bill. A base rate charge is applied to cover the cost that the City incurs to operate and maintain a potable water delivery system. The City of Buda uses a tiered rate structure to bill customers for the volume of water used. This means that "blocks" of water volumes are established with a specific rate charged for each block. Rates also differ based on whether the service connection is inside or outside city limits.

Charges increase as the volume of water used increases. This is a common billing practice used by many municipalities to provide financial motivation for customers to use water wisely. The average monthly water use for residential accounts in Buda is 7,000 gallons. For the typical family, this amount of water should be adequate to accommodate non-discretionary water uses necessary for health and hygiene such as cooking, bathing, and laundry. If a customer elects to use more water for non-discretionary uses such as outdoor irrigation, that decision comes at the cost of an increased water bill. The bottom table shows an example of how 11,000 gallons of water use would be billed.

If you are a water customer of the City of Buda and have questions regarding your bill, please call 512-295-8845.