



# Customer Service *Connections*

A publication of Saint Paul Regional Water Services

Winter 2016

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## **Water service base fee increases by \$1** No other rate changes for 2016

A \$1 per month increase in the water service base fee is the only change to your water bill for 2016. No other water rate changes take place this year.

You will see the change in your line items for your water bill under water service base fee.

The water service base fee is based upon the size of the water meter in the property. Most residents have a water meter three-fourths of an inch or less in size. The base fee for this meter size

increased from \$4 per month to \$5 per month.

The change will increase the annual water service base fee from \$48 a year to \$60 for a typical customer, or an increase of \$12 per year.

This will bring the typical water bill to \$321.76 for 2016, up from \$309.76 in 2015.

This increase of 3.87 percent will allow continued funding for operational and maintenance costs, capital improvements, and debt service.

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*Connections* is published by the Board of Water Commissioners, 1900 Rice Street, Saint Paul, MN 55113-6810. (651) 266-6350. Web: [www.stpaul.gov/water](http://www.stpaul.gov/water). Distributed to all Saint Paul Regional Water Services customers. © 2016

## **St. Paul residents see change to sewer charges** New calculation combines base and volume charges

If you live in St. Paul, you may notice that your bill includes a change to the way your St. Paul sewer charge is calculated.

The St. Paul public works department's sewer utility division is implementing a different rate structure in 2016 that splits the sanitary sewer charge into a base charge and a volume charge.

In the past, your sanitary sewer charge was generated solely on the volume of water your property consumed. The new structure takes into account that a large part of the cost of the city's sewer system is a fixed amount each year and, for the most part, does not change from year to year. The new base charge allows the sewer utility to plan for and maintain the infrastructure regardless of the volume of water consumed each year.

Combining base and volume charges allows the sewer utility to maintain the capital investment needed to keep the city's

billion-dollar sewer system in top working condition. The ability to better plan for and implement preventive maintenance and repair helps St. Paul public works avoid more costly emergency expenses and service interruptions.

To see how your sewer charge is calculated, view the back of your water bill. There is also additional information about St. Paul public works and the sewer utility available on St. Paul's website at: <https://www.stpaul.gov/departments/public-works/sewer-utility-division>.

The St. Paul sewer utility takes great pride in operating one of the best sewer systems in the country. The fixed revenue source allows public works to be predictable and proactive in maintaining this important community asset, ensuring that St. Paul residents are well served into the future.

If you have questions, you may contact Richard Ekobena (651) 266-6253 of the St. Paul sewer utility for additional information.

***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, 55113.

### Money Order or Check

In person, by return mail with your bill stub, or in our drop box.

The drop box is located in the visitor parking area at 1900 Rice Street; available 24 hours a day.

### 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.

### Do you winter in another residence?

*If you spend your winter months at a second residence and leave your property here vacant, you might consider having your water turned off during your absence.*

*If your heat goes out and your home is vacant, water pipes can freeze and burst. If the home thaws out, the water can cause considerable damage before you return home.*

*If you are interested in having your water shut off for the winter months, contact dispatch at 651-266-6868.*

## SPRWS wins fluoridation award

The water utility earned the Water Fluoridation Quality Award from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for 2014. Fluoridation is the adjustment of fluoride in the drinking water to a level that is effective for preventing tooth decay.

Fluoridation has been shown to prevent about 25 percent of tooth decay in children and adults, said Katherine Weno, a dentist and director of the CDC Division of Oral Health. Fluoridation has been hailed by the CDC as one of the 10 great public health achievements in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The water utility was recently awarded the commendation recognizing those water communities that achieved excellence in community water fluoridation by maintaining a consistent level of fluoride in drinking water throughout 2014.

In Minnesota, about 112 out of a possible 625 water utilities received these awards.

"We can be proud that in Minnesota, communities are employing this effective public health measure," said State Oral Health Director Merry Jo Thoele.

## 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.