



# Customer Service *Connections*

A publication of Saint Paul Regional Water Services

Winter 2017

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## Water rates and fees increase as of Jan. 1

Water rates went up by 12 cents a unit starting January 1, 2017. The Board of Water Commissioners approved the proposed increase as part of the budget at their Sept. 13, 2016, meeting. The Saint Paul city council also held a public hearing and approved the budget over the course of a couple meetings last

fall and winter. The water service base fee will also increase by \$3 a quarter to \$18 per quarter for residential customers who have meters  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch or smaller.

Business and residential customers who have larger meters can expect to pay more based on meter size. (See table.)

The rate increase is necessary to continue investing in system renewal and to perform critical operations and maintenance in times of decreasing consumption. Average residential water use has dropped from 22 units per residential single-family household each quarter to 17 units of water. Based on this average 17-unit quarterly consumption, a residential, single-family household can expect to pay \$12 more per year in the water service base fee and \$8.16 per year more in consumption fees based on a rate increase to \$2.69 per unit on average. (The average of the summer and winter rates noted on the table.)

This will result in an increase for a residential, single-family household of \$20.16

\* The water service base fee and water usage charges apply to the cities of Saint Paul, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Maplewood and West Saint Paul. All other customers pay 20 percent more. The water main replacement surcharge applies to the cities of Saint Paul, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Maplewood, Mendota Heights, and West Saint Paul.

Average residential, single-family customer using 17 units of water per quarter

WATER CHARGES IN 2017*	QTR 1	QTR 2	QTR 3	QTR 4	Annual Cost
Winter rate (\$2.64/unit x 17 units)	\$44.88	\$44.88			
Summer rate (\$2.74/unit x 17 units)			\$46.58	\$46.58	
Water Service Base Fee	\$18	\$18	\$18	\$18	
Water Main Replacement Surcharge (20 cents a unit x 17 units)	\$3.40	\$3.40	\$3.40	\$3.40	
Total	\$66.28	\$66.28	\$67.98	\$67.98	\$268.52
<b>SAINT PAUL ONLY</b>					
<b>ROW Recovery Fee</b>	<b>\$4.50</b>	<b>\$4.50</b>	<b>\$4.50</b>	<b>\$4.50</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$70.78</b>	<b>\$70.78</b>	<b>\$72.48</b>	<b>\$72.48</b>	<b>\$286.52</b>

## Water Service Base Fees 2017\*

Meter Size	Fee Per Billing Period
Smaller than 1"	\$18/quarter
1"	\$45/quarter
1.5" (Residential)	\$90/quarter
1.5" (Commercial)	\$30/month
2"	\$48/month
3"	\$96/month
4"	\$150/month
6"	\$300/month
8"	\$480/month
10"	\$690/month

per year for a total annual cost of \$286.52 in 2017, or \$71.63 a quarter. This equates to a 7.6 percent overall increase in rates and fees for the average, residential, single-family customer. Individual results will vary.

If you have questions, please call customer service at 651-266-6350.

**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

#### Money Order or Check

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

**For next-day processing**, at McCarrons Center. The drop box is located in the visitor parking area; 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.

### How to read your water meter

*Your water meter is located inside your home, generally about one foot off of the floor in your basement. It could also be in a crawl space, pit in the floor, or utility room.*

*The water usually comes in through the street side of the house. The meter sits on a water pipe that comes through the floor.*

*The head of the meter is about three inches in diameter. It has an LED box for displaying numbers.*

*You will need to activate the LED by shining a flashlight. Read all nine numbers from left to right.*

## What are your service lines made of? Find out online starting February 1

Saint Paul Regional Water Services serves 425,000 people in Saint Paul and the surrounding communities. We bill about 94,000 accounts every quarter.

Of those accounts, up to 28,000 could have lead service lines in their private property. About half of those also have lead service lines in the street right of way. Most of the rest of the water service lines in the system are made of copper.

If you would like to find out what our records show for the type of material your water services lines are made out of, starting on February 1, you can search online at

<https://billpay.saintpaulwater.com>. Select "What is my water service line made of?"

You will need your account number to access your account online.

Lead service lines are found mostly in older homes, since lead stopped being used in 1927; the exception being a few years in the mid-1940s in which lead was used instead of copper.

If you want to know what kind of material your water service line is made out of prior to February 1, you can always call our engineering service desk at 651-266-6270 to find out.

## 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.

**Check your account anytime at  
<https://billpay.saintpaulwater.com>**