



# Customer Service *Connections*

A publication of Saint Paul Regional Water Services

Fall 2020

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SPRWS 2020  
Customer Survey**

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## Board recommends customers pay \$0.006 a gallon for water in proposed 2021 budget

Customers will pay about \$0.006 for a gallon of water in 2021 if a budget that the Board of Water Commissioners recommended to the Saint Paul city council for approval gets passed this year. The Board made the recommendation at their Sept. 8 board meeting following a public hearing.

The rate increase will cost the average consumer 11 cents more per billing unit (748 gallons) or \$7.48 more per year for water use alone. This means it will cost a penny for 1.6 gallons of water in 2021.

There will be no increase to either the water service base fee or the water main replacement surcharge.

Average St. Paul residential water use is 17 units of water per residential single-family household each quarter.

*Individual results will vary based on meter size and actual consumption.*

The rate increase is necessary to continue investing in system renewal and perform critical operations and maintenance.

The water utility is responsible for the charges related to water: water service base fees, water consumption rates, and water main replacement charges.

A safe water drinking fee is collected on behalf of the state.

Water Volume Rates per Billing Unit				
Cities	2020		Proposed 2021	
	Summer	Winter	Summer	Winter
Saint Paul, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Maplewood, West Saint Paul	\$3.02	\$2.92	\$3.13	3.03
Mendota Heights	\$3.56	\$3.45	\$3.57	\$3.45
All other cities (20 % more)	\$3.62	\$3.50	\$3.76	\$3.64

In 2021, that fee will be \$9.72 per year, which will be pro-rated on your water bill at \$2.43 per quarter or \$0.81 per month. In St. Paul, we charge a right-of-way recovery fee.

### **Cities charge additional fees**

In addition, the water utility adds line item charges for additional city services on behalf of each city we serve. Those charges are set by the city in which you live and are approved by your city council. Depending on where you live, your bill could include charges for sanitary sewer, storm sewer, street lighting, recycling, water/hydrant, and/or water usage surcharges.

These municipal charges will affect the overall total you see on your bill.

If you have questions about the charges for municipal services provided by the city in which you live, please contact them directly at the number on the back of your bill.

If you have questions about your water charges, please call SPRWS customer service at 651-266-6350.

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

***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

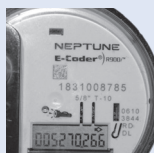
Have your payment deducted electronically from your checking or savings account. You'll still receive a statement; it will indicate which date the payment will be deducted from your account.

## How to read your 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 meter register 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.



**Use the QR Code to access a video on how to use your water meter to check for toilet leaks.**

More information at [stpaul.gov/water](http://stpaul.gov/water).

## Customers give SPRWS nearly 90 percent approval rating in 2020 opinion survey

Saint Paul Regional Water Services commissioned a customer survey that took place early in 2020. About 575 water utility customers were interviewed in a combination of phone and online surveys. Many of the things we asked about were personal to you, the customer. We asked what you thought of everything from our performance as a utility to your individual experiences with our staff.

The results indicate that an overwhelming majority of customers find SPRWS doing a good or excellent job, with water quality and water value also ranking very high.

Customers like you rate the overall performance of the utility to be good or excellent (89 percent). Most (87 percent) also believe that we do a good or excellent job of ensuring safe, reliable drinking water.

Most of you, 74 percent, think there are convenient payment options available, and 78 percent think that the water bill is clear and easy to understand.

Few of you called us for any reason (13 percent) and only 6 percent of you contacted us with a complaint. Of those who contacted us, 74 percent of you rated the quality of customer service at excellent or good. Half of you would prefer to communicate with us via phone, with 35 percent favoring email.

A high percentage (67) of you would like more information on having your water tested for lead, which we do for our customers at no charge.

Most (68 percent) would also like more information on lead in drinking water. (Go to <http://tinyurl.com/ya9anre2>.)

Most of you drink your water from the tap (69 percent), although 25 percent of you filter your tap water. Use of bottled water has doubled since our last survey in 2016, from 11 percent to 23 percent. The higher use of bottled water is being driven by younger customers (ages 19 - 44) for whom bottled water use tripled since 2016, from 11 to 32 percent, and by those ages 45 - 64, whose use of bottled water has doubled, from 10 percent to 21 percent. The reasons for drinking bottled water have remained about the same, with taste being the number one driver at 37 percent. While 24 percent said it was because bottled or filtered water was safer, 79 percent of all respondents thought the safety of your tap water was good or excellent. This indicates a need for us to do a better job educating our customers about the value and safety of tap water versus bottled or filtered water.

In regards to keeping you informed about changes in rates and services, 68 percent said we did a good or excellent job. Communicating with you about construction or emergency water shut downs that impacted your water service was rated excellent or good by 64 percent of you.

Overall, the majority of you, our customers, think that we are doing a good or excellent job in meeting our mission of providing you with quality water and services at a reasonable price.