



Customer Service *Connections*

A publication of Saint Paul Regional Water Services

Winter 2020

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**Snowbirds:
Turn Off Your Water
for the Winter**

**Why Is my Water
Cloudy?**

To Serve You Better

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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. Distributed to all Saint Paul Regional Water Services customers. © 2020

Water rates increase 6 cents a unit as of January 1

Water rates are up 6 cents a billing unit as of January 1, 2020.

The rate increase will help invest in system renewal and support 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. In 2020, that fee is \$9.72 per year, which is 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 includes line item charges for additional city services on behalf of each city served. Those charges are set by the city in which you live and are

Water Volume Rates per Billing Unit (748 gallons)		
Cities	2020	
	Summer	Winter
Saint Paul, Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Maplewood, West Saint Paul	\$3.02	\$2.92
Mendota Heights (18 % more in 2020)	\$3.56	\$3.45
All other cities (20 % more)	\$3.62	\$3.50

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 affect the overall total of 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.

Keep your home's pipes and water meter from freezing this winter

Every winter hundreds of water meters and pipes freeze in area homes. Make sure that doesn't happen to you.

Water meters, which typically sit several inches off the floor in the basements of most homes, can freeze in unheated space.

Pipes, valves, and the water meter should not touch concrete walls that are exposed to cold.

In addition:

- Check along the foundation and crawl spaces for cold-air leaks
- Close off crawl space vents
- Replace or repair broken or cracked basement windows
- Make sure that basement doors and windows close tightly
- Seal or caulk cracks in walls

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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.

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 651-266-6874.

Winter cold contributes to appearance of cloudy water

In the winter months, a milky or cloudy appearance to the water coming from the tap may appear. This is caused by air bubbles trapped in the water. The air bubbles are harmless and will rise to the surface and disappear after 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.

Keep your pipes from freezing

Pipes continued from page 1

- Insulate pipes
- Make sure the valves on either side of the water meter work and can be turned off

If your water meter freezes, the bottom plate will crack.

Do not try to repair the meter yourself; call us.

It is unlawful for anyone other than a water utility employee to remove a water meter except in

cases of an emergency. In such cases, call SPRWS immediately.

If we need to replace a damaged meter, including damage caused by freezing, the homeowner will be charged for the meter. Replacing a new meter can cost \$300 or more.

If you suspect damaged or frozen water pipes or water meter, call the SPRWS 24-hour dispatch office at 651-266-6874.

Check your account any time at
<https://billpay.saintpaulwater.com>