Exceeding customer expectations through the innovative treatment and transmission of water and wastewater, and the provision of services that promote healthy communities and economic growth.

For More Information:
Detroit Water and Sewerage Department
Public Affairs Division
735 Randolph, Suite 1001
Detroit, MI 48226
www.dwsd.org
Effective March 1, 2012 please be advised that changes have been made to the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department's (DWSD) Landlord Tenant Agreement (LTA) process.

A LTA is an agreement that transfers the responsibility of the DWSD water and sewer bill payment from the landlord to the tenant.

Procedure to establish an agreement:

To establish a LTA, the tenant must come in to a DWSD Customer Service Center with valid picture identification. The identification must contain the service address. Tenants must show a valid lease agreement, and pay a deposit in cash or certified funds.

Deposit(s) based on 2011-2012 rates subject to change with implementation of new rates.

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Additional Tenant Information:

- Tenants must pay their water and sewer bills on time and in full. If the tenant is unable to pay, satisfactory payment arrangements must be made with the department.

- If a tenant fails to maintain their account in good status, the LTA may go into default and the service may revert into the Landlord’s name. Once reverted, all bills from that point will become a lien against the property served.

- The tenant will be held responsible for all charges during the time the service was in their name. Any deposit held will be applied to the outstanding balance.

- If the tenant defaults on the agreement, they will be required to come into a DWSD office with valid identification and bring their account current or make satisfactory payment arrangements. An additional deposit will be required.

- Tenants are required to have the new metering technology installed at their residence. Information generated from the DWSD system can help manage water bills by identifying potential water wastage. Call Customer Service at (313) 267-8000 to schedule an appointment for this free equipment installation.
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Additional Landlord Information:

- Landlords may request to receive duplicate water bills in the mail.
- Copies of tenants’ delinquent notices will be mailed to landlords.
- Landlords will be mailed notification of the department’s intent to default an LTA.
- Service may revert into the landlord’s name if the tenant fails to respond to the department’s request for payment.
- The lien may be re-established against the property as of the tenant’s default date.
- Delinquent balances that are not subject to the LTA provisions will be referred to the City of Detroit Treasurer for collection from the property owner.
- Landlords are required to have the new metering technology installed at the residence. If a house does not currently have the automated system, call Customer Service at (313) 267-8000 to schedule an appointment for this free equipment installation. Information generated from the DWSD system can help manage water bills by identifying potential water wastage.
- Landlords and property management companies with more than three requests for service may call the DWSD Landlord Tenant Unit for appointments at (313) 267-8007.
- Landlords can monitor account(s) status by using the department’s online services at www.dwsd.org. Documentation necessary to establish a LTA may be submitted via e-mail to landlordtenant@dwsd.org.
Manage your water/sewer account online at DWSD.org

We know your time is valuable and it's not always convenient to visit our customer service centers or call our representatives. That's why our website now offers a number of ways for you to access and manage your water and wastewater account.

Those with computer access can now go online at DWSD.org to access important account information. Those with Premium Account Service can do even more (and all customers can enroll into the Premium Account Service option with proper identification). Here are a few of the online services available to you:

"Standard" Account Service
With this access you can:
• Set up one-time bill payments
• Check your account balance and due date
• View consumption, billing and payment history

"Premium" Account Service
With Premium Service you can enjoy all the benefits of Standard Service and can also:
• Set up and change your user profile
• Sign up one-time or recurring online bill payment
• Request services (such as meter readings, and final meter readings before real estate closing)
• Request a field investigation associated with your water/sewer bill
• Request a payment extension or an installment plan
• Submit a bill dispute
• Request a budget plan (see article on this page)
• Request a document
• Request water usage
• Enroll to receive an electronic bill in addition to a hard copy

All customers can enroll into the Premium Service option with a valid identification and proof of property ownership.

About the only thing a customer will not be able to do online is create a new account because of the need to verify identity and property information.

Continually improving your service
Our online account management services are all part of DWSD's ongoing effort to continually improve customer service. We value our customers and understand that the process of bill payment can be improved. It is our commitment to continually explore and implement new technologies and practices that will serve you better.

More information is available by calling (313) 267-8000.

Are you having difficulty keeping current on your water bill?

DWSF’s new Budget Payment Plan can help.

In today's economy, we're all working hard to manage our expenses. With a budget payment plan, you'll know exactly what you owe each and every month with no guessing involved. Under this plan, which is similar to budget plans offered by DTIE Energy, participating DWSD customers will receive a flat monthly bill based on their actual usage. The budget plan doesn't eliminate the need to pay your bill but it does eliminate the guesswork each month.

Customers with "premium" access can go online today to set up a budget plan. (All customers can enroll into the Premium Service option with a valid identification and proof of property ownership.) You can also call our customer service line at (313) 267-8000 or come into one of our three customer service centers to set up your plan.

Eligible customers must have DWSD's new Automated Meter Reading (AMR) technology installed and cannot have an outstanding balance that is more than 60 days past due. If you do not currently have the AMR technology, please contact Customer Service at 313-267-8000 to schedule an appointment for this free installation.

There are additional assistance programs available for customers experiencing difficulty in paying their bills. For more information, visit one of our Customer Service Centers or call (313) 267-8000.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING REAL ESTATE CLOSING READ BILLS

Michigan state law provides a lien upon a house or other building and upon the premises as security for the collection of water or sewer rates. Unpaid water and sewer balances can be transferred once a year to Detroit property taxes. Once the past due amount is transferred, Wayne County can and may initiate a foreclosure on the property. Requesting a final real estate closing read will ensure that the title to the property is clear, outstanding balances are paid, and is strongly suggested by DWSD to protect both the property owner and the buyer.

Q. Why should I schedule a real estate closing read appointment?

A. To accurately determine the balance due. DWSD will read and test the water meter for accuracy and issue a final real estate closing bill for the referenced address.

Q. How do I schedule a real estate closing read appointment?

A. By visiting any Detroit Water and Sewerage Customer Service Office, or by calling the Real Estate Closing Customer Service telephone number at (313) 267-8009 or via email: closings@dwd.org.

Office locations: 735 Randolph, between Bates and Farmer 13303 E. McNichols Road at Alcoy St. 15600 W. Grand River at Winthrop St.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING REAL ESTATE CLOSING READ BILLS

Q. What time will the real estate appointment take place?

A. The real estate closing appointments are scheduled Monday through Friday between the hours of 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Q. When should I schedule the real estate closing appointment?

A. DWSD will attempt to produce the final real estate closing bill within thirty days (30) of the scheduled date. Therefore, the real estate closing read should be scheduled at least 30 days prior to closing.

Q. Is there a fee for the real estate closing?

A. Yes. There is a $30.00 fee assessed for the final real estate closing bill for non-automated meter reading accounts. You may either pay the fee at the time you schedule the appointment, or the fee will be added to the final billing.

If you have any questions, you may contact our Real Estate Closing Unit at (313) 267-8009.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING THE DETROIT WATER AND SEWERAGE DEPARTMENT (DWSD) TAX ROLL PROGRAM.

Q. What gives DWSD the right to add water bills to property taxes?
A. The Municipal Water Lien Act, MCL 123.161, the General Property Tax Act, MCL 211.78k, the City Charter Section 7-1502, and various ordinances provide DWSD the legal authority for liens on property receiving water or sewerage services.

Q. When did the department start doing this?
A. DWSD began exercising its legal rights to refer delinquent balances to the property taxes in 2005/2006.

Q. Why wasn't I informed?
A. DWSD first notified the public of its intent through information cards included with water and sewer bills. Currently the department uses bill messaging and also sends individual letters to those who may be impacted.

Q. What period does the delinquency cover?
Q. Why was this amount added to my property taxes?

A. Because you failed to respond within ten days to the letter mailed to your attention informing you that the delinquent balance indicated was going to be placed on your property taxes, or you did not make an arrangement to pay the entire delinquent balance or enter into an extended Payment Plan Agreement.

Q. Can this amount be removed from my property taxes?

A. No. You must pay the delinquent amount indicated to property taxes.

Q. Can I lose my property over this delinquency?

A. Yes. Wayne County can foreclose on your property for any unpaid portion of your property taxes, inclusive of the delinquent water/sewer balance.

Q. Can I make payment arrangements with property taxes?

A. No.

Q. Will the department continue to exercise this option each year?

A. Yes.

Q. How can I prevent this balance from being added to my property taxes?

A. By paying your entire delinquent balance owing or by entering into a Payment Plan Agreement with the Water and Sewerage Department within the allotted time.

Q. After DWSD has referred my account to the Treasurer for collection, where do I make my payment?

A. The City of Detroit Property Tax Division is located at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center at 2 Woodward Avenue, 10th floor, Room 1012. (313) 224-4188 or (313) 224-3575.

**NOTE:** Payment to DWSD must be received in certified check, money order or cash.
Why are sewer rates higher than water rates?

The process of cleaning wastewater is more involved and costly than the process of purifying drinking water. Raw water used to make drinking water comes from the Great Lakes which is a high-quality source. Wastewater, or sewage, is dirtier to begin with requiring a greater amount of treatment prior to being discharged.

Some communities have combined sewer systems where a single pipe collects both sewage and storm water. These communities can have even higher sewer rates because a greater volume of flow is sent to the treatment plant during rain storms. Communities with combined systems are also required to undertake improvements to prevent overflows.

Why can’t all communities get the same wholesale water rate? How come communities that are farther out and higher up have to pay more?

There are many issues that impact rates from community to community making direct comparisons difficult. The rates charged to local residents are set by individual communities and include costs to maintain local water mains, pumps and storage tanks.

Because water distribution systems do not work by gravity, the cost to transport water is impacted by the distance it must travel. Increased energy costs are incurred the farther and higher the drinking water must be pumped. Therefore, the higher costs to service communities farther out and at higher elevations are born by that community. This approach is consistent with billing standards used by other communities and developed by the American Water Works Association.

Wholesale water rates charged by DWSD vary by community based on usage of water, distance from the water treatment plant, and elevation change from the plant. The basis for allocating more cost to communities that use more water is that DWSD must build greater production capacity to meet the communities’ maximum daily demand. Because of this, costs are higher for communities with higher peak demand.

Why does my water and sewer bill come from my community but the water comes from DWSD?

DWSD is a wholesale provider and your community is the final provider of water and wastewater service. Your community’s service includes maintaining the pipes and infrastructure between your house and DWSD’s system as well as reading meters and performing billing. If you have a problem with service to your home, your community will work with you to solve the problem.

Why does my community charge fees on top of what DWSD charges for water and sewer service?

DWSD provides “wholesale” service to all customers of the system.

DWSD delivers water to a point in your local community’s system and then the community transports it to your house. The community builds, maintains and operates its own infrastructure of water mains, pumps, and in some cases storage tanks.

This is also true of sewers — your community transports the sewage through its sewers to a major Detroit interceptor (sewer) that takes the sewage to the Detroit Wastewater Treatment Plant. Your community is also responsible for the billing and collection functions. Your bills include the costs from DWSD and your community’s costs to complete the delivery of services.
How are water and sewer rates set?

Each local community sets water and sewer rates for their residents and businesses. Typically, these rates cover the cost that the local community incurs in delivering water and wastewater service in addition to the charges they pay DWSD for services provided.

DWSD rates with communities are set through an established process each year. Rate setting is a forward-looking process based on estimated future use and actual past usage from the communities.

Why can't rates be better managed to reduce fluctuations?

Just like yearly household expenditures, water and sewage rates can vary from year to year. Overall costs are impacted by use of the system, required capital improvement projects, and operation and maintenance costs.

On the water side, seasonal usage of water has a dramatic impact on the overall cost of service. Increases or decreases in maximum day or peak hour usage due to changes in summer seasonal usage can contribute to significantly higher peak demand and rates.

Why do rates increase?

Because the water and wastewater treatment systems are aging, they must be maintained or replaced on a regular basis to ensure reliable service. The primary driver of rates increase is the amount of new and rehabilitation projects completed under the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department's (DWSD) Capital Improvement Program. Frequently, new projects must also be undertaken to maintain compliance with increasingly stringent regulatory requirements.

Operation & Maintenance (O&M) of the water and wastewater systems also impacts rates. Just like other systems that must be operated and maintained, DWSD's system is impacted by inflation and the cost of utilities, chemicals and property insurance. As new facilities are brought on line, overall expenses increase as well.

Why do residents have to pay sewer charges on sprinkler water for their lawns?

The water meter at your home or business is used to determine charges for sanitary sewers with the assumption that most of the water used in your home or business eventually flows into the sanitary sewer (clothes, dish washing, showers, toilets, etc). Both water and sewer bills are based on the water that flows through your water meter.

Your water bill is based on the number of cubic feet of water used. There are approximately 7.5 gallons of water in a cubic foot.
How can residents save money on their water/wastewater bill?

Conserving and using water wisely is the best way to save money on your water and wastewater bills. Steps you can take to reduce your water usage include:

- Water your lawn wisely – it only needs 0.5 to 1.5 inches of water per week (MSU Extension Turf Tips for Homeowners). Over watering lawns results in shallow-rooted plants that are less tolerant of heat and drought, and more prone to disease.
- Water your lawn during off-peak hours such as during the early morning or late afternoon.
- Check for leaks and drips. Toilets are the most common source of leaks and can frequently be fixed with a new flapper. Dripping faucets can usually be repaired with the rubber O-ring or washer inside the valve.
- Replace your old toilet, the largest water user inside your home. If your home was built before 1992, chances are you would benefit from a newer, more efficient toilet.
- Use rainwater to water your plants. Direct downspouts toward your plants and green areas or collect water with rain barrels for use later.
- Make your lawn cheaper and easier to maintain by mowing high (three inches is recommended). Longer grass has deeper roots and requires less water.

Search the Internet for effective ways to conserve water. The water wiser site (www.awwa.org/waterwiser) from the American Water Works Association is a great place to start with links to other sites.

Who fixes my water main when it breaks?

Water mains are owned by different entities. Typically, DWSD owns the larger transmission mains that deliver water to each community. The local community owns the water mains that transport the water from the transmission main to your home. Whoever owns and operates the water main fixes it. If the broken water main is in a local road, your community will fix it since they own it. If a large transmission main that connects to your community's system needs work, DWSD will perform the work since DWSD owns it.

What kind of water and wastewater projects are being undertaken by DWSD?

DWSD is continually upgrading and maintaining the water and sewer systems. Two major studies were recently completed to help guide this process: a Water Master Plan and a Wastewater Master Plan. Both plans were developed with input from communities served by DWSD and take a 50-year view into the future of what customer demands will be like. Both plans include a Long Term Rehabilitation and Repair Program that identifies maintenance projects that will be necessary over the next 20 to 50 years. Projects from these programs are used to update the 5-year Capital Improvement Program that identifies water and sewer projects. Additional information about Capital Improvement Program projects can be obtained from DWSD’s website at www.dwsd.org.

My house has been empty. Why do I still receive charges on my water bill?

There are certain services that must be provided regardless of the amount of water used that contribute to monthly fixed costs such as meter reading, customer accounting, and maintenance of water mains. Therefore, a home that is not actively using water but has an active connection will still incur minimal charges.
**Water Emergency Facts**

Nearly four million people in southeast Michigan receive high-quality drinking water by means of an intricate, and efficient system of water mains operated by the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department (DWSD). The system is so efficient that – most of the time when a water main breaks – residents who live in the area of the break won’t notice any change in their service. At most, they may notice a slight change in the pressure of the water flowing from their tap.

Occasionally, a water main break will result in a disruption of service.

**Q. What is a “Boil Water Alert”?**

A. DWSD issues a “Boil Water Alert” when the purity of water in the mains is in question in a specific area or areas. This involves bringing water to be consumed to a rolling boil for five minutes. Let the water cool, then pour back and forth between two sanitary containers to add air for improved taste.

The Department issues Boil Water Alerts in such instances as serious water main breaks, or low pressure.

**Q. When the purity of the water in the mains is compromised, is it okay to use bottled water for drinking and cooking?**

A. Yes.

**Q. What should I do if my water is completely cut off?**

A. In the event of a complete loss of water, Detroit residents should contact DWSD’s 24-hour emergency number, (313) 267-7401. Those who live outside of the City of Detroit should contact their local water department at the number listed on your water bills or in the local white pages.
Q. If I completely lose my water service, are there any other sources of water available for drinking or cooking?

A. In the event of a complete loss of water service, your home contains a number of sources of water suitable for human consumption. These include:

- Water stored in your pipes,
- Water stored in your water heater,
- Water stored in your toilet tank (NOT THE BOWL, AND ONLY IF IT HAS NOT BEEN TREATED WITH CHEMICALS),
- Ice cubes from your freezer,
- Rainwater, and
- Snow.

To use the water in your pipes, let air into the plumbing by turning on the faucet at the highest point in your house, and drain the water from the faucet at the lowest point.

To use the water in your water heater, be sure the electricity or gas is shut off. Open the drain at the bottom of the tank. Start the water flowing by turning off the cold water intake valve above the hot-water tank, and turning on any hot-water faucet. DO NOT TURN ON THE GAS OR ELECTRICITY WHEN THE TANK IS EMPTY.

Rainwater or water from snow should be disinfected before drinking. DWSD recommends bringing this water to a rolling boil for five minutes before consuming.

Q. If there is a problem with the water in the mains, do I need to purify it for bathing, and personal hygiene?

A. Unless an individual has open sores or broken skin, water does not need to be purified before bathing. Individuals with open sores or broken skin should purify any water used for bathing by bringing it to a rolling boil for five minutes before using.
Q. Can I use my dishwasher if a “Boil Water Alert” is in effect?

A. Most automatic home dishwashers don’t effectively sanitize dishes, glasses, and eating utensils. After running a machine load, it is best to rinse them with a pot of water that has been brought to a rolling boil for, at least, five minutes. Allow to air dry before use.

Q. Will my clothes washing machine be affected?

A. Clothes washing should not be affected. However, water under low pressure in mains can contain rust, which can stain clothes. It is best to wait until full service has been restored before doing any wash. Once water service has been restored, run the washer through a cycle in order to flush any foreign matter from the lines.

For More Information

You can find more emergency water facts information by clicking below to access the Detroit Fire Department's Family Protection Program Web site:

http://www.ci.detroit.mi.us/fire/FAMILY%20PROTECTION%20PROGRAM.htm