



SCHUYLKILL COUNTY MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY
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2016 WATER AND SEWER RATE ADJUSTMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why is it necessary to increase rates?

- To restructure rates by assigning actual costs of service to each specific classification (residential, commercial, industrial, institutional) for drinking water and assign self-sustaining rates for each individual sewer system.
- To maintain compliance with State (PA DEP) and Federal (US EPA) regulations.
- To ensure our water and sewer systems remain financially solvent (operating expenditures are in accordance with revenues) due to increasing operation and maintenance expenses. Increased operating expenses and maintenance costs include but are not limited to: power and pumping costs; material and supply costs; transportation and fuel costs; collection and distribution expenses; and laboratory analysis expenses.
- To fund unavoidable capital improvements that are necessary to keep our water and sewer systems operating reliably. Investment into infrastructure sustainability is required to assure future availability of an abundant supply of clean, potable water and fire protection to all water customers and reliable sanitary sewer treatment to all sewer customers. Aging water and wastewater infrastructure systems will require significant upgrades to the source of supplies, production and treatment systems, storage, and distribution/collection systems in the upcoming years. According to national studies conducted it is estimated that the United States will need \$1 Trillion in buried water and wastewater infrastructure needs in next 25 years.

How was the rate increase determined?

- SCMA contracted with a professional rate consultant, Gannett Fleming Rate Consultants, Inc. in Camp Hill, PA, to conduct a comprehensive Water and Sewer Rate Study. SCMA will be instituting the rate adjustment to drinking water and sanitary sewer fees based on the recommendations set forth in the rate studies.

When was the last time my rates were increased?

- The last time the drinking water rates were increased was in 2011. Prior to the water rate increase in 2011, the rates were not adjusted for 18 years, since 1993. The sewer rates have never been adjusted from either the construction of the system or the acquisition of the system.

When will the rate adjustment take effect?

- The rate increase is effective August 1, 2016 and will be reflected on bills due on or after September 30, 2016.

How will the increase affect me?

Water Customers

- An increase from \$39.60 per quarter to \$46.80 per quarter for customers using the allowable minimum of 900 cubic feet or 6,700 gallons. Customers using the minimum can expect to see their bills rise by only \$28.80 per year, \$7.20 per quarterly billing cycle, or 8¢ per day.
- Customers using more than the allowable minimum will see a higher cost for their usage. A typical family using the average quarterly consumption of 1,400 cubic feet, or about 116 gallons per day, will see their bill increase by 15¢ per day, \$13.95 per quarter, or \$55.80 per year.
- Our minimum residential rate equates to \$0.52 per day, vs. \$0.44 per day with our previous rates before the increase.

Wastewater Customers

- Branch/Cass - \$58.00/month to \$70.00/month
- Tremont - \$45.00/month to \$58.00/month
- Gordon – Restructured by classification to include various rates
 - Highridge & Pumped Sections - \$11.30/1,000 gallons
 - Gravity Sections - \$3.75/1,000 gallons
- Deer Lake – will remain at \$73.00/month

How do SCMA's rates compare to other community's water and sewer rates?

- SCMA's minimum residential water rates are currently the lowest in county and will remain the lowest in county after the proposed increase, based upon an internal study completed by our Consulting Engineers. SCMA's sewer rates are assigned a self-sustaining value for each individual sewer system by evaluating the actual cost of services for the sewer division.

What can I do to keep my water bill as low as possible?

A typical household can use as much as 400 gallons of water per day. Follow these simple steps to help conserve water:

- Turn off the water while brushing teeth or using the bathroom sink. Most water waste happens in the bathroom.
- Replace your toilet with a new, low-flow model. Most new models use about 1.5 gallons per flush – compared to as many as 8 gallons per flush for older toilets.
- Try a low-flow showerhead. New showerheads use about half as much water as older models, while still providing a comfortable stream of water in the shower.
- Water your garden in the morning or evening, not during the day.
- Install a rain barrel to collect rainwater that can be used for irrigation in the backyard.
- Use the “quick wash” option on your dishwasher – your dishes will still get clean, but you'll use less water.
- Front-loading washing machines use about half as much water as top-loading washing machines. After the toilet, the clothes washer is the second-largest water user in the typical home.

I still have questions, where can I get additional information?

- Schuylkill County Municipal Authority is working to answer your questions as thoroughly as possible.
- If you have additional questions, please contact Schuylkill County Municipal Authority office at (570) 622-8240 to speak with a customer service representative or email us at info@scmawater.com.