



2024 Water, Sewer and Stormwater Rates

The City of Washougal operates and maintains water, sewer and stormwater utilities, serving more than 17,490 customers. The safe and reliable delivery of these services is of utmost importance to each individual customer and to the overall health of our community. Utility systems are extremely complex and require a substantial financial investment to operate and maintain. Establishing appropriate rates to support the operations of each utility is critically important to ensure the reliability and safety of these services to the community.

HOW ARE RATES ESTABLISHED?

To establish the new rates for each of the utilities, city staff worked with a 9-member Community Advisory Committee (CAC) along with an independent third-party consultant for over a year period.

The CAC was formed in a deliberative manner to ensure that it is representative of the full range of ratepayers in the city. The city required interested members of the community to apply to be on the CAC and provided information about the role and time commitment required. CAC members had diverse backgrounds, experience, and expertise, and include long-time and new community members, as well as individuals with experience in government, finance, and business, and administration. The CAC met six times over a nine-month period to receive detailed information on utility operations, revenue requirements, cost of service, and rate design.

The largest cost driver for providing utility services is, required capital facilities (infrastructure investments). To mitigate the impact of rate increases the group reviewed the cost-of-service, rate reinvestment funding, funding strategies (grants/loans), and capital programs to determine the best path forward.

WHEN WERE THE NEW RATES SET?

Rates for the 2024-2028 rate window were adopted on January 22, 2024.

WHERE DOES REVENUE FROM CUSTOMER-PAID UTILITY RATES GO?

The revenue received from customer-paid rates is, by law, consigned to individual enterprise accounts used exclusively for the cost of providing the utility service. This ensures that utility revenues and costs remain verifiable and separate from the General Fund, which is tax-funded and supports core municipal services such as police, fire, parks and streets.

The City of Washougal has always charged our own utilities a utility tax, which is a standard practice for public and private utilities (gas, phone, cable, etc). This year, and moving forward the utility tax that has been built-in to the rates will be separated out in all billings.



2024 WATER RATES

For the water utility, after a 10 year phase-out, the rate structure has reached the point in which you only pay for a base fee and actual consumption instead of paying for an allowance (set amount included in the flat fee). This structure allows all customer classes to control their bill.

Meter Size	2024 Bi-Monthly Base Rate
3/4"	\$42.03

*1 CCF = 100 cubic feet of water = 748 gallons

For all usage, customers will pay the following (per unit):

Single Family Residential	2024 Volume Charge
0-12 CCF	\$2.33
13-30 CCF	\$6.32
Over 30 CCF	\$7.92

Water Utilities are subject to a 10% utility tax.

2024 SEWER RATES

For the sewer utility, we needed to include adequate funding for two costly components of infrastructure over the next five years to remain in compliance with the permit issued to the City by the Washington State Department of Ecology. One of these projects will complete the mechanical plant and bring the City up to current standards for treatment of biosolids (the byproduct of treating wastewater).

2024 will continue the rate structure for residential sewer customers: flow-based sewer billing. The structure mirrors the water utility by charging a base rate plus consumption and is calculated by using your water consumption. To ensure we are only capturing the true water usage that makes its way to sewer, your sewer bill will be calculated using a winter average; this avoids irrigation or other outside of the house uses and is the industry standard. The billings used to calculate your winter average will be December/February (even month billings) or January/March (odd month billings).

New customers, customers without a winter average or customers that have an average of zero will receive the city average of 11 CCF.

2024 Bi-Monthly Base Rate	
Single Family Residential Sewer	\$81.41
2024 Volume Charge	
Single Family Residential per CCF	\$5.96

Sewer Utilities are subject to a 8.81% utility tax.

2024 STORMWATER RATES

For the stormwater utility, we were also operating under mandates of the Washington State Department of Ecology and new rules that were published and went into effect in 2019. We were able to identify existing subsidies between commercial and residential customers during the rate study. In 2018, commercial/industrial customers who held a stormwater permit issued by Washington State Department of Ecology received a 75% discount; this was deemed to be beyond the industry standard using market comparables. Over the next three years this discount was reduced to 50%, lowering impacts to residential stormwater rates.

2024 Bi-Monthly Base Rate

Single Family Residential Stormwater	\$34.44
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Stormwater Utilities are subject to a 6% utility tax.

Sewer Rate Structure Example:

If you were to consume 12 CCF in December and 10 ccf in February your billing would include the bi-monthly base rate plus 11 CCF (based on the table to the left) $(81.44 + 65.56 (5.96 \times 11) + \$12.95 (u-tax) = \$159.59$.

RATE COMPARISON

For more detailed rate information and to compare 2023 rates with 2024 rates by service, please visit cityofwashougal.us/utilityrates.

