

Frequently Asked Questions For Water / Sewer

Q. Why does my bill change from month to month?

A. Bills change according to water usage, which fluctuates as a result of a number of things, including the number of people who live at a property. Everyone has different personal water habits that will affect the amount of water used in a given month, and water consumption may vary from season to season. Many customers increase their water consumption in the summer months by watering gardens, washing cars, filling swimming pools, etc. Bills may also fluctuate based on the number of days in a billing period. Monthly bills can on occasion be over or under 30 days depending upon the day your meter was read.

Q. Why is my bill so high?

A. Bills change according to water usage, which fluctuates from month to month. Many customers increase their water consumption in the summer months by watering gardens, washing cars, filling swimming pools, etc. Otherwise, a drastic increase in consumption could be an indication of a leak. If you suspect a leak in your home, check toilets and faucets for defects and have them repaired immediately. If you cannot find a leak, contact the Water Department at 706-335-4200.

Q. How do I check for leaks?

A. Faucets – Check all faucets and piping for leaks by monitoring for drips of water under sinks and from exposed pipes. Perform an inspection with the water on and off, as some leaks only occur when the water is on. Toilets – Add a few drops of food coloring in the toilet tank. If the food coloring appears in the toilet bowl, this means you have a leak. Some toilet leaks are intermittent, so you don't always see or hear the water running. Check plumbing in the basement by monitoring for drips of water coming from exposed pipes. Check your meter – turn off all water using appliances, faucets, outside hoses or sprinklers and make sure no one is using water in the home. Read your meter and write the number down. After an hour with no water use, check the meter again. You should have the same number. If not, you may have a leak somewhere in your home.

Q. How can I lower my bill and conserve water?

A. Bills change according to water usage, which can fluctuate based on personal water habits. You can lower the water consumption at your property by installing water saving devices or following some simple conservation tips. Check our conservation page for more ideas.

Q. I had to have my water service pipe replaced. Who is responsible for the cost?

A. The water service pipe is the pipe that connects a property to the water main in the street. The City owns all public water mains, hydrants, valves, water service connections, and associated appurtenances. The City also owns the water meter. The Customer owns the water service pipe from the water service connection in the street to the meter and all other pipes after the meter. The customer is therefore responsible for the cost of a water service pipe replacement.

Q. I will temporarily be away. What should I do?

A. If you will be away for an extended period of time, you may request to shut off the water service at your property. Please contact our service department at (706) 335-3164. Please note that there is a Fee to Turn-on and off your service.

Q. How do I prevent my pipes from freezing?

A. To prevent your pipes from freezing:

- Insulate pipes in unheated spaces like garages, basements, and crawl spaces.
- Additionally, insulating hot water pipes will decrease your wait time for warm water.
- Repair broken and cracked windows, doors, and walls. Close all doors and windows near pipes, and make sure there is no draft.
- During cold weather (prolonged temperatures below 32 degrees), allow a slow trickle of water to flow through faucets connected to water pipes that run through unheated spaces.
- Disconnect garden hoses, and install covers on all outside faucets. Shut off water to outside faucets, and drain those water lines.

Q. How do I read my water meter?

A. Your water meter is read from left to right, just like a car odometer.

Q. How can I obtain a bill history or a duplicate bill for my account?

A. Contact Customer Service at 706-335-3164.

Q. How can I change my mailing address?

A. If you are moving, it is necessary to update the mailing address on your account. You may contact Customer Service at 706-335-3164.

Q. Why is my drinking water cloudy?

A. Cloudiness in water is caused by tiny air bubbles. After a short time, the bubbles rise to the top and the cloudiness disappears.

Q. Why is my drinking water discolored?

A. Discolored water is usually caused by flow changes in the water mains. Sediment, which is usually caused by pipe corrosion, can build up on the inside of water main pipes. This sediment can be disturbed when the pressure or direction of the water flow changes, causing it to become suspended in the drinking water and come out of the tap.

Q. What do I do if my water is discolored?

A. If you experience discolored water, run all cold-water faucets for two to three minutes, shut the water off, allow the water to settle for about 15 minutes, and run the water again for two to three minutes. If the water does not run clear, repeat this process. Do not run the hot water faucets until the cold water runs clear. If the water does not become clear after repeating this process multiple times, contact us at 706-335-4200.

Q. Where can I get more information on the quality of Commerce's drinking water?

A. The Commerce Water and Sewer Department (706)-335- 4200 publishes an annual water quality report which talks about the source of Commerce's drinking water, shows water quality test results, and confirms that our water meets the requirements for safe drinking water established by state and federal standards.