



UTILITIES DEPARTMENT
FACSIMILE: 720-898-7603 ▲ TDD: 720-898-7869
PHONE: 720-898-7760

2023 Customer Water Rates & Fees: Frequently Asked Questions

**Updated as of 10/6/2022*

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How much are rates increasing?

The City has recommended the following for all residential* water and wastewater (sewer) customers:

- Water rates increase of 12.3% or to:
 - Tier 1: \$5.03 per 1,000 gallons.
 - Tier 2: \$6.29 per 1,000 gallons.
 - Tier 3: \$7.56 per 1,000 gallons.
 - Tier 4: \$10.07 per 1,000 gallons.

Learn more about the [tiers for water usage](#).

- Wastewater rates increase to \$5.82 per 1,000 gallons of water used (or 9.8% increase).
- A bi-monthly water service fee increases to \$13.83 (\$4 per bill).
- A bi-monthly wastewater service fee increases to \$6.44 (\$2 per bill).
- A bi-monthly stormwater service fee increases to \$0.0031 (or 2% increase).

This means the overall revenue increase for 2023 is 14% for water and 12% for wastewater. Please reference the [Water & Sewer Rates and Fees webpage](#) for more Information.

**Please note these increases vary for non-residential and/or out-of-city customers. Please reference the complete 2023 proposed [ordinances for water](#) and [wastewater/stormwater](#).*

Why are rates increasing?

Water rates increase year over year to keep up with inflation and general maintenance and repairs as needed. We continue to invest in our infrastructure to ensure we can continue to deliver clean, reliable drinking water and dispose of wastewater after use.

Just like homeownership, over time the City must make substantial investments to maintain, repair and replace parts of our water and wastewater systems. These increases in rates and fees will help to fund the necessary reinvestment in these systems, including the water plants, water and wastewater pipelines, storage tanks, pump stations, to ensure we continue to provide the level of service our customers have come to expect.

- Here are some examples of projects for 2023:
 - Major rehabilitation for our 60 year old water treatment plant
 - Replacement of water lines at end of life
 - Design for a replacement of our secondary 40 year old water treatment plant
 - Wastewater (sewer) pipeline repair and replacement

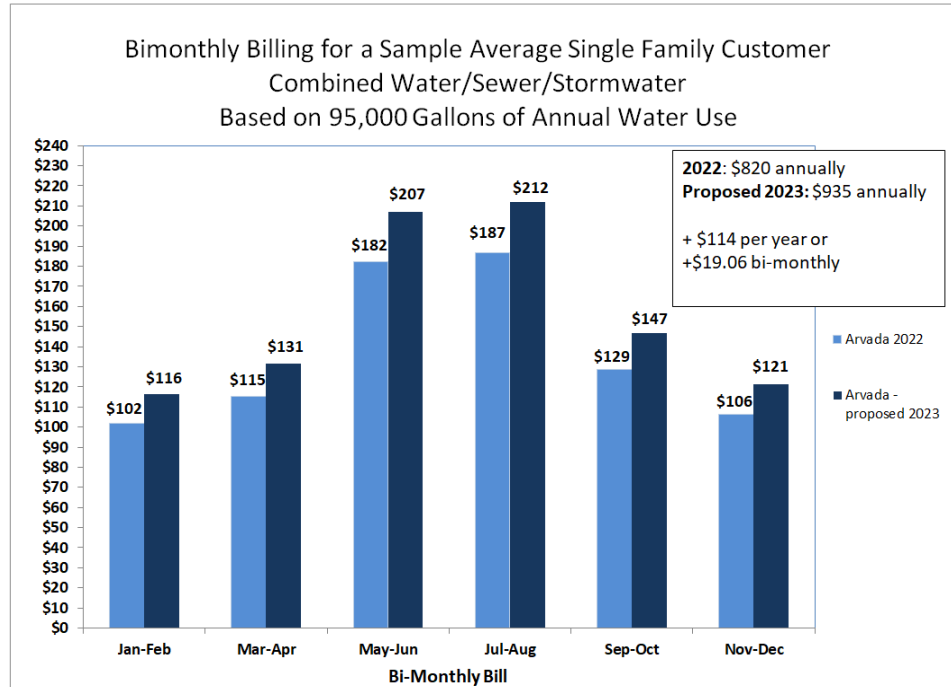
Additional factors include:

- We have partnerships with Denver Water for about 75% of our water supply and Metro Water Recovery for wastewater treatment. Denver Water is raising rates by 15% in 2023 and Metro is raising theirs by 5%.
- We have no current debt in the City's utilities funds. Part of the rate and fee increases will help make bond payments for major reinvestment projects. This money will NOT pay for adding capacity to the system for planned development.
- We are also raising System Development Charges at the same time to make sure *growth pays for itself in Arvada*. These "SDCs" will be paid by new development to fund bond payments and projects that add system capacity so our existing businesses and residents do not.

What can I expect compared to previous years?

The most substantial changes will be reflected in the water and sewer rate portions of your bill. The water rates and fees will increase by 14% in 2023. The wastewater (sewer) rates and fees will increase by 12%. For the average user in a single family home, this comes to an increase of \$114.37 for the year or \$19.06 per bi-monthly bill. The chart below shows a comparison of bi-monthly bills in 2022 and 2023 for the average user.

**Average monthly indoor water use is 4,000 gallons or 8,000 gallons bi-monthly.*



As always, this means the more you use, the more you will pay. As a reminder, the City uses a tiered rate system. Tier 1 covers the first 30,000 gallons of use in a two month period. The higher tiers come with an increased rate. [Learn more about tiers on the Water and Sewer Billing Rates](#) page. Watch this video for more information on [Understanding Your Utility Bill](#).

When will I see these increases on my bill?

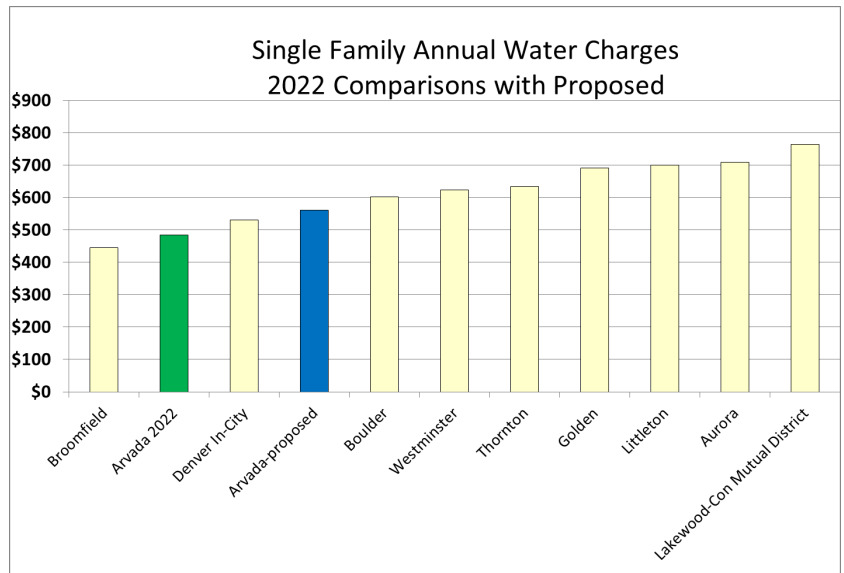
Changes will be reflected beginning with your **first bill in 2023**. Customers across Arvada receive their bills at different times depending on when their water meter is read.

- Your first bill may reflect usage from November, December, January and/or February.
- **Every customer pays for 365 days of water at the rate for that year.** The bill reflects the 8 weeks of water use, prior to the bill date.
- Here is an example:
 - If you receive a bill in January for charges from Nov. 15, 2022 to Jan. 15, 2023. The January bill will reflect water usage between those dates. Since the meter is read in January, once the new rates are in effect, you will pay the new rate, same as you had the year before.
 - Another customer may receive their first bi-monthly bill in February reflecting use in December and January.
 - Both customers will have completed billing cycles for 365 days of water usage at the 2022 rate and will pay for 365 days of water usage at the 2023 rate. The date at which that usage is reflected is just slightly different.
- **Many people may not notice much difference until the warmer months when water usage, and outdoor watering, increase.** Learn more about [outdoor watering guidelines here](#).
- The fixed water and wastewater service fees will be reflected on your first bill in 2023.

Please reference the [Understanding Your Utility Bill video](#) or the [Water and Sewer Rates and Fees webpage](#) for more information.

How do these increases compare to surrounding cities?

Even with the upcoming investments and increases, the diligent work of former and current City teams has helped us maintain relatively low rates and fees for our customers compared to our neighbors! Please reference the chart to the right for examples.



Are these increases because of the new development in Arvada?

No, the City of Arvada is committed to a philosophy that growth pays for growth. This means that customer rates and fees pay for the necessary reinvestment in the repair, replacement and maintenance of existing water and wastewater systems. Developers pay System Development Charges (SDC) when they connect new homes and businesses to our existing system. These charges help cover the investment in expanding the capacity of our water and wastewater system. Learn more on the [Utilities Transparency webpage](#).

How was information shared before the increase was approved?

The City works diligently each year to share information about the increases coming to your water bill. These past few years, as the City has been planning for substantial improvements and investments, we have shared information in the following ways:

**Please note this is an overview and not representative of every communication or touchpoint with the Arvada community and customers. Some touchpoints reference multiple pieces of information.*

2020-2022:

- 23 Arvada Report articles
- 16 City Council public workshops and master planning updates
- 4 YouTube video interviews with the Mayor
- 1 Utilities Transparency webpage
- Additional updates in the Utility Bill insert and Arvada News.

Where can I get assistance paying my bill?

Utility bill assistance in the state of Colorado can be found through [LEAP \(Low-Income Energy Assistance Program\)](#). They have added additional federal funding for water assistance through a program called LIHWAP (Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program).

Please visit the LEAP website to see if you qualify cdhs.colorado.gov/leap or call 1-866-432-8435 for assistance.

What steps can I take to reduce my water bill amount?

We have several resources on the City website for water conservation through a variety of guidelines and programs. Please reference these webpages:

- [Sign up for a Smart Controller](#) upgrade with [Resource Central](#)
- [Outdoor Watering Guidelines & Restrictions](#)
- [Watering Tips video](#)
- [Water Saving Programs](#)
- [Water Conservation Information](#)

Where can I find more information?

We encourage you to visit the [Utilities Transparency webpage](#) for more background information about the planning process for decision making around increases to the water bill rates and fees. Other helpful resources include:

- [Understanding Your Utility Bill video](#)
- [Water & Sewer Rates and Fees webpage](#)
- 2021 interviews with the Mayor: [episode 1](#), [episode 2](#), [episode 3](#), [episode 4](#)