

City of St. Helens
RESOLUTION NO. 1809

A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH WATER, SEWER, STORM DRAINAGE
UTILITY RATES AND ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

WHEREAS, pursuant to St. Helens Municipal Code Title 13, Water, Sewer, and Storm Drainage Utility rates and charges are to be established by resolution; and

WHEREAS, on December 20, 2017, a public comment period was held by the City Council to provide information about the proposed schedule for utility rates and administrative rules; and

WHEREAS, the Council deliberated on December 20, 2017.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF ST. HELENS RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The water, sewer, storm drainage utility rates and charges and administrative rules set forth in Exhibits 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, attached hereto and made a part thereof by this reference, are hereby adopted.

Section 2. This Resolution implements increases effective January 1, 2018.

Section 3. This Resolution supersedes Resolution Nos. 1725, 1758, and 1763 and any previous resolutions setting forth water, sewer, storm drainage utility rates and administrative rules.

Approved and adopted by the City Council on December 20, 2017, by the following vote:

Ayes: Locke, Carlson, Conn, Morten, Scholl

Nays: None


Rick Scholl, Mayor

ATTEST:


Kathy Payne, City Recorder

City of St. Helens
Utility Billing Administrative Rules
Approved by City Council – As of 12/20/2017

1 NEW ACCOUNTS & DEPOSIT

To begin service a Utility Account Application must be filled out and turned into the Utility Billing office. The application is available at the office and online. Water service will not be turned on until an application is reviewed and approved by the Utility Billing staff. A Renter is required to receive a signature from the property owner approving the renter to begin service and also acknowledging responsibility for any unpaid bill that is remaining on the account when service ends.

Water Service can be turned on/off by Public Works employees from Monday through Friday 830 AM – 400 PM. There is no cost to turn on service for new customers. Outside of normal hours listed above, Water Service can be turned on/off by request for a fee of \$100.

When a customer is new, any old account at the service address must be paid in full before a new account is started and water service is turned on. In the case of renters, an old account bill responsibility will fall to the homeowner to be paid before a new renter's service will be turned on. It is the owner/renter's responsibility to notify the utility billing department when a renter is moving out so that a final bill can be processed.

When any account (Business, Residential and Industrial) is assessed a late fee three (3) times or more within a calendar year, a deposit in the amount of equal to one (1) month of utility service will be required to be paid to the City to continue service. This fee and amount is applied at the discretion of the Finance Director of the City of St. Helens.

2 UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Utility Assistance Program, formerly known as the Senior Citizen Discount, was permanently discontinued on December 4, 2013. Customers who previously qualified and were receiving assistance prior to December 4, 2013, will continue to receive a fixed discount of \$20 per bi-monthly billing (\$10 per monthly billing) as long as they continue to meet the following criteria:

1. Age 65 or Older
2. Currently reside in residence that receives the Senior Citizen Discount
3. Residence is within City Limits
4. Provide proof of residency (i.e. PGE Bill, Tax Form, Etc.) once a year

Failure to show proof of this criteria by June 30, will result in a loss of the Senior Citizen Discount program without the option of reapplying. Mailing to residents who receive this discount will begin in March and include instructions on how to continue with the discount program.

3 **Bi-Monthly & Monthly Billing**

Bi-Monthly Billing

Billings are mailed out through a 3rd Party vendor selected by the City of St. Helens by the 15th of the EVEN numbered months. Bi-Monthly Billings are DUE by the 10th of the ODD months. Payments can be made by Cash, Check, Money Order, Credit/Debit, Online and Phone. If 2 check payments are returned for NSF or other reasons checks will no longer be accepted as payment for the account. Auto payments are processed on the 10th of every month.

Monthly Billing

Billings are mailed out through a 3rd Party vendor selected by the City of St. Helens by the 15th of every month. Monthly Billing DUE date is the 10th of every month. Payments can be made by Cash, Check, Money Order, Credit/Debit, Online and Phone. Payments by phone are not allowed at this time due to liability of credit card numbers recorded. Payments made online are posted to our accounting system daily every morning. If 2 check payments are returned for NSF or other reasons checks will no longer be accepted as payment for the account. Auto payments are processed on the 10th of every month.

4 **BILLING ADJUSTMENTS**

Misread Meter

If a meter is misread during the monthly or bi-monthly reading cycle, the City will refund any/all late fees and immediately re-read the meter and bill accordingly. If testing a customer's meter results in detection of under/over billing, then that test ratio of discrepancy may be applied on bills retroactively.

Leak Adjustment

1. The Water Leak Adjustment form is available on the City's website and at the Utility Billing counter. This form must be completed within 45 days of the billing date in question.
2. The Water Leak Adjustment form must be accompanied by a 3rd party statement that the leak was present and repaired or receipts for leak repair materials if completed by the homeowner.
3. If the water leak is not approved, the customer will receive notification from the City with a specific reason why. A customer can request an appeal process with the Finance Director.

If the water leak is approved for processing, the City will use the customer's average seasonal usage for the previous 3 years as a base for consumption. If the customer does not have enough history to complete this, then the City will use the previous 1-3 consecutive months of consumption to calculate the leak and volume adjustment

amount. Once approved, the leak adjustment amount will be credited back to the customer's account and the customer will be notified by the City.

4. The City will not consider leak adjustment requests from customers who have already received a leak adjustment in the past 12 months unless there are extenuating circumstances.
5. The minimum credit issued will be \$25.

5 PAYMENT PLANS

Bi-Monthly Billing:

Customers may request a payment plan prior to the 10th of the month (On or before Billing Due Date).

Payment Plans are setup with customers who have made contact with the City before a Late Fee has been assessed. Payment Plans must be completed by the next Shut-Off date. A customer will not avoid a Shut-off if the payment plan is not completed by the Shut-off day.

Monthly Billing:

Customers may request a payment plan prior to the 10th of the month (On or before Billing Due Date). Customers are allowed ONE payment plan approval in each Calendar year.

Payment Plans are setup with customers who have made contact with the City before a Late Fee has been assessed. A customer will not be allowed to be setup on a payment plan AFTER a late fee has been placed on their account for the current month.

Payment Plans must be completed by the next Shut-Off date. Having and keeping a payment plan in process will allow a customer to avoid receiving a late fee, but a customer will not avoid a Shut-off if the payment plan is not completed by the Shut-off day.

6 DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

Late Fee Assessment

On Billing due months, the official due date for Utility Bills is the 10th day of the month. If the 10th lands on a Holiday, Weekend, or any other day that the City Offices are not normally open, the due date is the next business operating day.

Customers who carryover a balance of = or < \$25.00 will not be charged a late fee or shut off during the billing process. Upon failure to pay an account below the \$25.00 threshold carryover, customers will be charged a \$25 Late Fee Assessment on the morning after the official due date.

Shut-Off Procedure

For Bi-Monthly billings, this schedule will apply to the Due Date Month. For Monthly Billing this schedule will apply to every month.

Official Due Date = 10th of every month (or next available business day)
 Late Fee Charged = 15th of every month (or next available business day)
 Shut-Off Process = Begins on 20th of every month (or next available business day)

After the late fee is assessed, a pre-recorded message will go out for customers who are currently delinquent requesting payment or their service will be shut off near the end of the month.

On the actual shut-off day, if an account is still in shut-off status, an additional \$75 Reconnection Fee is placed onto the account and the account must be paid in full via cash, debit, or credit card. Payments via check at this time will not be accepted. Payments made ONLINE during shut-off may be required to wait until the next business day and "official posting" of the payment is made before service to be restored.

Utility Workers are not allowed to accept any form of payment. Payment must be made to bring the account below a \$25 carryover threshold before the meter and water service is turned back on.

Water shut-off and reconnection service will not be available during Holidays and weekends.

7 FINAL BILLING

The City requests that all homeowners and/or tenants give the City notice of the intent to vacate a property to prepare a final bill and shut-off of the account. Please leave a forward address, if/when known, for the final bill to be mailed.

Final Billings, if not paid by the scheduled due date, will be immediately sent to the City's collection agency for processing.

8 TEMPORARY SERVICES FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION

The City will allow temporary service during construction of a new structure needing water, sewer and/or storm drainage. The contractor will be required to complete an application just like a new customer and pay a \$25 deposit. All of the Administration Rules contained herein remain in effect.

9 NSF PAYMENTS

Accounts will only be allowed 2 NSFs before a note is placed on their account that the City will no longer accept checks as payment.

Bi-Monthly Billing:

When the City receives an NSF notice for a Utility Payment, the payment is immediately reversed and the account is charged a \$25 fee. The account will be contacted and required to

make a payment within 3 business days of notification, otherwise water services will be shut-off and a shut-off fee of \$75 will be assessed at that time.

Monthly Billing:

When the City receives an NSF notice for a Utility Payment, the payment is immediately reversed and the account is charged a \$25 fee. The account will be added to the current month's shut-off notice list and begin the shut-off procedures.

10 TAMPERING WITH METERS

It is illegal to tamper with meters. This includes turning on/off meters. City staff and Public Works specifically should be the only people addressing meters on site. If tampering is found to happen on a meter and/or shut-off attachment, the homeowner is ultimately responsible and will be charged a minimum of \$50 up to and possibly including the cost of the meter if it needs to be replaced and labor time.

If a customer is currently on the City's shut-off list and it is found that the water meter was turned on after City staff turned the service off for non-payment, the account will be charged a minimum of \$100 up to and possibly including the cost of the meter plus labor time if it needs to be replaced. The \$100 will be placed on the Utility Billing account to be paid immediately before service will be restored.

If a customer's meter is currently "Locked" by City staff and it is found that the meter and/or shut-off attachment has been tampered in any way to turn water service on, the account will be charged a minimum of \$200 up to and the cost of replacing the meter, labor time, and including a ticket from the local Police for tampering which includes an additional fee amount and an appearance in city court.

**City of St. Helens
Water Utility Rates and Charges**

Billings for customers include two components: Fixed rate and a volume charge for the amount consumed. The two components are added together to compute an invoice for each customer. Fixed rates are based on costs associated with maintaining/reading meters and the costs associated with billing and are charged for connection to the water system. Volume rates are based on the customer class for each 100 cubic feet (CCF) of water. The following table lists rates for customers within the City of St. Helens, retail customers outside the City of St. Helens, and wholesale customers.

City of St. Helens rates and charges are effective for billing cycles starting on or after dates shown below. Rates and charges shall be applied to all accounts on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Certain designated accounts that may be deemed "Large Volume" accounts are billed monthly.

WATER UTILITY RATE COMPONENTS	INSIDE CITY LIMITS Effective 1/1/2018	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Effective 1/1/2018
Fixed Rate		
Monthly Billing	10.82	21.64
Bi-Monthly Billing	21.64	43.27
Volume Rate		
Residential	5.3871	10.7743
Multifamily:		
Duplex	5.2003	10.3996
Apartments	5.0960	10.1916
Commercial / Industrial	4.3684	8.7357
Wholesale		3.2556

Outside the City limits of the City of St. Helens

Except as indicated in the Enterprise Zone Ordinance No. 2500, all properties outside the city limits shall be charged rates identified above.

Application for new service connection outside the city limits for surplus city water shall be reviewed by the Public Works Director and the City Council for facilities planning. Such application shall not be approved by the City Council unless the necessary size of main is extended to serve anticipated growth in the relevant area of the City's Urban Growth Boundary.

No Connection for new service outside the city limits for City water shall be installed unless a consent to annex is submitted to the Planning Department and an outside City water user agreement is signed and received by the City Administrator.

Hydrant Meter

Any customer who receives a permit for a hydrant meter shall pay a deposit of \$200 and shall pay Commercial/Industrial rates for such water usage. Such customer shall also pay a monthly rental fee for

the meter of \$25 per month, or portion thereof. Meters must be returned every 12 months for assessment of condition, meter readings and billings of usage.

Water Testing Charges

Upon request by a City water customer, the City will provide testing for total coliform and fecal coliform. The City will charge the customer \$45 for testing. This charge also applies to construction requests for the same test on new pipelines.

Meter Testing

A customer may request the meter providing water service to their property be tested for accuracy. The test will require the following deposits to be collected before testing:

METER SIZE	DEPOSIT
One inch or less	\$100
> One inch and < One and a half inches	\$150
> One and a half inches	Up to Public Works Director

If testing results show the meter was faulty, the deposits will be refunded; if not, then no refund will be given. Adjustments will be governed by the Utility Billing Administrative Rules.

**City of St. Helens
Sewer Utility Rates and Charges**

Billings for customers include two components: Fixed rate and a volume charge for the amount consumed. The two components are added together to compute an invoice for each customer. Fixed rates are based on costs associated with maintaining/reading meters and the costs associated with billing and are charged for connection to the water system. Volume rates are based on the customer class for each 100 cubic feet (CCF) of water. The following table lists rates for customers within the City of St. Helens, retail customers outside the City of St. Helens, and wholesale customers.

City of St. Helens rates and charges are effective for billing cycles starting on or after dates shown below. Rates and charges shall be applied to all accounts on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Certain designated accounts that may be deemed "Large Volume" accounts are billed monthly.

SEWER UTILITY RATE COMPONENTS	INSIDE CITY LIMITS Effective 1/1/2018	OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS Effective 1/1/2018
Fixed Rate		
Monthly Billing	15.76	19.71
Bi-Monthly Billing	31.51	39.38
Volume Rate		
Residential (SFR)	6.0536	7.5644
Multifamily		
Two Residential Sewer	6.6952	8.3716
Duplex	4.8325	6.0329
Apartments	4.6463	5.8156
Commercial		
Low Strength	5.4328	6.7883
Medium Strength	6.8711	8.5889
High Strength	9.5616	11.9416
Wholesale		1.8420

Residential Sewer Accounts – Winter Averaging

Volume will be based on a 4-month winter averaging of water consumption. The winter average period will be defined as the 4-month period starting with the first full billing cycle starting on or after December 15th of each year.

Accounts with an average usage of less than 1 CCF of water consumption are automatically assessed at the 5.50 CCF average.

Customers may request in writing to have the sewer based on actual usage if the property is vacant or consistently averages below 1 CCF per billing cycle over a 12-month period.

The assigned average for water consumption may be appealed to the Finance Director and could be modified pending a review of the account and findings thereof.

Table Utilized to Define Commercial Strengths

Strength Classification	BOD (mg/l)	TSS (mg/l)
Low	0-250	0-300
Medium	251-500	301-600
High	501-1,000	601-1,200
Special	1,001+	1,201+

The responsible person for paying the sewer charge may appeal the strength classification made by the City. Such appeal shall be made in writing to the Finance Director. The person appealing must provide sufficient information as to the strength of the sewer discharge created by their use so that the Finance Director or designee may evaluate the evidence and determine the proper strength of the waste generated.

Outside City Limit Customers

Except as indicated in the Enterprise Zone Ordinance No. 2500, all properties outside the city limits shall be charged rates identified above or designated specifically by address in Exhibit 5 of this resolution.

Application for new service connection outside the city limits for City sewer shall be reviewed by the Public Works Director and the City Council for facilities planning. Such application shall not be approved by the City Council unless the necessary size of main is extended to serve anticipated growth in the relevant area of the City's Urban Growth Boundary.

No connection for new service outside the city limits for City sewer shall be installed unless a consent to annex is submitted to Planning Department and an outside City sewer user agreement are signed are received by the Water Department.

Dormant Sewer Lines

Testing of a dormant existing sewer line connected to an old building or to be reused for a new building will be at a cost of time and materials.

City of St. Helens
Storm Utility Rates and Charges

Billings for customers are based on amount of impervious surface for a property. The measurements are broken down into components of single family units or equivalent residential units.

City of St. Helens rates and charges are effective for billing cycles starting on or after dates shown below. Rates and charges shall be applied to all accounts on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Certain designated accounts may be deemed "Large Volume" accounts are billed monthly.

STORM DRAINAGE UTILITY RATES	MONTHLY Effective 1/1/2018	BI-MONTHLY Effective 1/1/2018
Residential	11.33	22.66
Commercial	11.33	22.66
Industrial	11.33	22.66
All other Users	11.33	22.66

City of St. Helens
McNulty PUD Water Users – Sewage Charges by City of St. Helens

The City of St. Helens is establishing Sewage rates for customers that have locations outside of City Limits that are receiving water from McNulty PUD. Volume rates are based on each 100 cubic feet (ccf) of water averaged over a Calendar's previous year.

Estimated Schedule of Utility Rates:

McNulty Usage Reports on Volume from previous calendar year cycle (Nov-Oct) will determine Sewage rates to be effective January 2018 through December 2018.

The following table lists rates for customers outside the City of St. Helens receiving water from McNulty PUD.

LOCATION OF CUSTOMER	CITY SEWAGE RATE
35369 Millard Road	102.78
58581 Columbia River Highway	54.26
58606 Kavanagh Avenue	51.38
58563 Columbia River Highway	25.55
35531 Firway Lane	67.32
35031 Millard Road	34.98
58209 Columbia River Highway	2,010.13
35285 Millard Road	32.44
34950 Pittsburg Road	113.35