



CITY OF SNOHOMISH

Founded 1859, Incorporated 1890

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RATE CHANGE **Frequently Asked Questions**

Why are the Rates going up?

The primary reason for the rate increase is a federal court consent decree requiring the City to make improvements to its Wastewater system. The improvements include the design and upgrading of the Treatment Plant and a series of improvements designed to regulate combined sewer overflows (CSO's) to acceptable Department of Ecology limits. The projects **must** begin no later than **2009 – 2011** in order to be in compliance with the court order. The cost of the projects is in excess of **\$20 million**.

Didn't the City upgrade the Plant not too long ago?

When the existing wastewater treatment plant was designed in 1993, it met all federal and state clean water standards. However, following a state study of the Snohomish River in 1999, the standards are now more restrictive and a significant remodel of the plant is required to meet the new regulations.

How are the wastewater (sewer) rates changing?

The base rate increases depending on meter size and the bi-monthly unit allowance decreases. The unit allowance is the amount of water that is included in the base rate. The rate for units over the allowance decreases from \$3.70 to \$3.10 per unit. The rate sheets are available on the City's website at www.ci.snohomish.wa.us

How are the water rates changing?

The base rate remains the same and bi-monthly unit allowance decreases. The unit allowance is the amount of water that is included in the base rate. The rate for units over the allowance increases from \$2.50 to \$2.68 per unit. The rate sheets are available on the City's website at www.ci.snohomish.wa.us

How much water is in the unit allowance?

A unit of water (ccf) equals 748 gallons. The allowance varies with the size of the meter. For example, a 5/8 inch meter has a 2 month allowance of 4 units or 2,992 gallons. Most residences in the City of Snohomish have a 5/8 inch meter.

Is any of this money going to pay for Snohomish Station?

The rate money is not used for any new development. The new trunkline is being paid for by new connections to the lines in the form of a development fee paid by developers.

Are there discounted rates for Senior Citizens?

Yes! The City continues to offer discounted rates for low-income seniors and low-income disabled persons! The City Council retained the unit allowance at current levels (8 units) as well as reducing the rates from 50% of minimum charges to 25%. information about these discounts may be found by calling (360) 568-3115 or by visiting the City's website at www.ci.snohomish.wa.us

When will I see the rates in my bill?

The rates are effective February 1, 2008 for accounts on routes 09 through 17 (cycle 2) and will appear on the March 31, 2008 invoice. The rates are effective March 1, 2008 for accounts in routes 01 through 08 (cycle 1) and will appear on the April 30, 2008 invoice.

When is payment due on my invoice?

The due date of your utility invoice will be the 20th of the month. (example: Invoice dated March 31, 2008 will have a due date of April 20, 2008)

Do I have to pay sewer charges for watering my lawn in the summertime?

All metered wastewater accounts will have wastewater overage charges for the two summer billing cycles based on either their winter average consumption or current period consumption. A credit will be applied to the regular charges. There is no longer a cap on the winter average credit that will be applied.

What is the stormwater charge and why do I have to pay it?

The Federal Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq., requires certain political entities, such as the City, to implement stormwater management programs. The City of Snohomish has determined that the stormwater system provides for the collection, treatment, storage and disposal of stormwater provides benefits and services to all property within the incorporated city limits. Such benefits include, but are not limited to: the provision of adequate systems of collection, conveyance, detention, treatment and release of stormwater; the reduction of hazards to property and life resulting from stormwater runoff; improvements in general health and welfare through reduction of undesirable stormwater conditions; and improvements to the water quality in the stormwater and surface water system and its receiving waters.

All single family residential properties in the City are charged a flat stormwater management fee, equal to the base rate, regardless of the size of the parcel or the improvements. This base rate for 2008 is \$15.88 every two months.

Other developed properties such as commercial or multi-family developments are charged based on their impervious surface area.

Is the City making any efforts to get State or Federal assistance?

The City continues to work with its 44th District state legislative delegation to obtain additional state funding in 2008. The City will also work with our federal legislators this year to acquire funds that would offset future rate increases. These federal and state grants could offset a large portion of future rate increases that would otherwise be necessary. For example, another \$5 million in state or federal government grants would reduce future rate increases for sewer by about 17% and \$10 million in grants would reduce the future increases by 34%.

If you are interested in supporting the City's ongoing efforts to obtain additional grant funds that would offset future rate increases, please contact your state and federal legislators. To find contact information, see the following websites: for the state's 44th Legislative District (<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/>); for the 2nd Congressional District (<http://www.house.gov/>) and for members of the U.S. Senate (<http://www.senate.gov/>).