



2015 WATER & SEWER RATE STUDY FAQs

Q: How do I benefit from the water and sewer rate increases?

A: Antioch's water and sewer customers benefit by having the lowest rates in our area while receiving the same high level of service that our customers have come to expect. This includes a 24 hour emergency standby system by State certified operators.

- Antioch has a lower operating expense per water service connection compared with our neighboring agencies. The City of Antioch has designed these rates so that we operate with zero debt. Unless unforeseen circumstances require, Antioch will not need to issue bonds to complete projects to maintain and upgrade our existing systems. Antioch's rate increases are also among the lowest in our area. The new water rate structure provides the ability for the City to treat and deliver clean, safe, reliable drinking water meeting State health standards to the customers tap. In addition, there will be sufficient supply to meet demands such as fire flow, peak hour and maximum day demand.
- The new sewer rate structure and increase will ensure that all customers who discharge water into the sewer system will pay the same amount per volume discharged. City crews maintain and repair properly installed service laterals from the cleanout to the main. In addition, all sewer mains are cleaned with the goal of preventing overflows and remain in regulatory compliance.

Q: Is the new water tier rate structure legal?

A: Yes. The water rate tier structure adopted by the City complies with all Proposition 218 requirements. The water rate tier prices correlate with the actual cost to provide water at those tier levels. The Tier 1 price considers the costs associated with average use. The Tier 2 price considers costs associated with above average use. Development of the water rate tier structure is shown in the May 2015 Water and Sewer Rates and Capacity Charges Study. The City had an independent consultant develop the water tier rate structure and hired outside legal counsel to review the water tier rate structure.

Q: San Juan Capistrano's tiered rates were determined to be illegal. How does Antioch's tiered rates differ from San Juan Capistrano's?

A: Here is a section from the court's ruling on the Capistrano Taxpayer Association, INC., V. the City of San Juan Capistrano.

"The water agency here did not try to calculate the cost of actually providing water at its various tier levels. It merely allocated all its costs among the price tier levels, but not based on costs, but on pre-determined usage budgets. Accordingly, the trial court correctly determined the agency had failed to carry the burden imposed on it by another part of Proposition 218 (art, XIII D, § 6, subd. (b)(5)) of showing it had complied with the requirement water fees not exceed the cost of service attributable to a parcel."

The City of Antioch water rate tier prices correlate with the actual cost to provide water at those tier levels. The Tier 1 price considers the costs associated with average use within the City of Antioch. The Tier 2 price considers costs associated with above average use. Development of the water rate tier structure is shown in the May 2015 Water and Sewer Rates and Capacity Charges Study.



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Q: Are there other changes that I need to be aware of?

A: The City has reinstated a late penalty fee for all water and sewer bills that are paid late. This fee helps cover the expense of the software needed to identify bills that are past due, staff time and equipment needed to process a past due account. The fee is 5% of the unpaid bill.

Q: Why are there different zone charges for water?

A: Antioch has four elevation zones. The difference in the zone charges is to recover the expense of providing water to higher elevation parcels within the City. Zone I is fed by gravity from the water treatment plant, Zones II through IV need one or several booster pump stations to provide water supply and pressure to higher elevations. The rate per zone helps pay for the electricity, staff and equipment needed to operate and maintain the booster pump stations. This also includes the maintenance and fuel needed to provide emergency backup power in the event of a power failure.

Q: How do I know which zone I am in?

A: Your water bill will provide the zone you are in. This information can be found on the upper left hand corner of your monthly water bill.

Q: How many gallons in a Hundred Cubic Feet (HCF or CCF)?

A: 748 gallons. The City of Antioch measures water use by units for billing purposes:
1 unit of water billed = 100 cubic feet = 748 gallons.

More information on reading your water meter can be found at
<http://ci.antioch.ca.us/Environmental/Water/Water-meter-Reading.pdf>.

Q: How is my meter read?

A: Meters are read electronically. The meter reader has 89 routes in Antioch that are broken down into three zones. These zones are read every month on the same day give or take 3-4 days. Our current normal billing cycle is 28-31 days depending on the month. Prior to the implementation of the new tiered rates, meters were read between 25 and 35 days. This practice has been modified to the new 28 to 31 day schedule. The change allows for a standard billing cycle as billing cycle issues were brought to our attention by several residents in Antioch. It is our hope the standardization of the meter reads will address billing length issues which have been brought to our attention.

Q: How does the new tier rate affect me when I have 8 people living in my household?

A: The Tier 1 price considers the costs associated with average use within the City of Antioch. The Tier 2 price considers costs associated with above average use. Development of the water rate tier structure is shown in the May 2015 Water and Sewer Rates and Capacity Charges Study. The City can only charge based on use and cannot legally tie charges to the number of people in a household or the size of a lot.



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Q: How will I know how many units of water I am using?

A: The number of units used in each residential billing cycle will be indicated on the bill as Tier 1 and Tier 2 and the associated zone cost, if applicable. This information can be found in the "Consumption" area of your monthly water bill along with gallons used.