



Explanation of charges

City of Columbia Utilities monthly water bills reflect two different kinds of charges for each residential and commercial customer: base charges and consumption charges. Here is a breakdown of charges for these different charges and how they will impact customers:

Base charges

Base charges are fixed monthly rates based on the customer's meter size. These charges cover the utility's cost of connecting the water infrastructure to a home or business. The City of Columbia also has a fire flow charge to cover the cost of providing water for fire protection.

In the current rate structure, these items are listed separately on the bill. The total base charge and fire flow charge for residential customers (5/8 and 3/4 inch meter size) is \$14.07.

In the proposed rate structure, the Water Utility would combine the two costs under base charges. The proposed base charge for residential customers would be \$14.32, an increase of 25 cents per month.

For commercial customers, the size of the water meter and the customer's water usage are on Page 1 of the Utilities bill.

Base charges		
Meter size	Current	Proposed
5/8 and 3/4 inch	\$14.07	\$14.32
1 inch	\$21.84	\$27.46
1.5 inches	\$42.96	\$51.39
2 inches	\$64.04	\$106.27
3 inches	\$196.30	\$194.17
4 inches	\$408.20	\$363.79
6 inches	\$869.71	\$642.05

Consumption charges

Consumption charges are associated with the amount of water a household uses each billing period. The City of Columbia charges per 100 cubic feet (ccf), which is approximately 748 gallons.

The City uses an inclining block structure, which means the customer's rate per ccf increases when that customer should exceed certain thresholds.

Consumption charges (per ccf)		
	Current	Proposed
Tier 1	\$3.22	\$2.30
Airport	\$4.66	\$4.66
Tier 2	\$4.44	\$6.33
Tier 3	\$6.89	\$10.20
Irrigation	\$6.89	\$10.20

In the current rate structure, all non-summer usage (October through May) is charged at the Tier 1 rate.

During the summer months (June through September), the individualized tiers are based on the customer's winter average consumption (WAC). The winter average consumption is the customer's average water use during the immediate preceding billing periods of January, February, and March, and is updated annually.

- **Summer Tier 1:** Usage of 0% to 70% of customer's WAC
- **Summer Tier 2:** Usage of 71% to 170% of customer's WAC
- **Summer Tier 3:** Usage exceeding 170% of customer's WAC

In the proposed rate structure, the Water Utility is looking to make two changes. First, the tiers would be applied year-round rather than only during the summer months. Second, the first tier would extend to 100% of the customer's winter average consumption. The proposed percentage increase in tiered charges means customers who have consistent usage each month won't see their bills fluctuate with the seasons.

- **Tier 1:** Usage of 0% to 100% of customer's WAC
- **Tier 2:** Usage of 100% to 200% of customer's WAC
- **Tier 3:** Usage exceeding 200% of customer's WAC