

HOW TO READ YOUR DETROIT WATER BILL

DESIGN BY
KRONOSPHERE
DESIGN

OUTLIER
MEDIA

Local, accountable, informed.

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Water is an expensive necessity. **This guide** can help Detroit residents better understand their DWSD bills. It will explain what costs cover, what to do if you believe your bill is incorrect and what to do if you need help with your water or sewer service.

With **2,700** miles of water main for freshwater and **3,000** miles of sewage collection piping to take away waste, Detroit's infrastructure was built for many more people than currently live in the city. The smaller population shares infrastructure costs and significant debt service.

GREAT LAKES WATER AUTHORITY (GLWA)

In 2014 GLWA was formed at the tail end of Detroit's bankruptcy proceedings.

The founding document is a **40-year lease** that handed over control of Detroit's water and sewerage system to GLWA.

The regional authority is controlled by a majority **non-Detroit** board, because the entire region relies on water and sewage infrastructure built by Detroit.

GLWA will lease DWSD's water infrastructure for \$50 million a year until **2056**.

DETROIT WATER & SEWERAGE DEPARTMENT (DWSD)

DWSD is required to use the \$50 million received from GLWA's lease to repair aging water infrastructure and pay off associated debt.

DWSD owns Detroit's water and wastewater system and GLWA operates that system, which was built to handle the water needs of the entire region.

DWSD is also responsible for calculating, issuing and collecting your water bill.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THESE TWO ENTITIES, [CLICK HERE](#).

WATER CHARGES

PAGE 1 of your water bill is a summary of your water usage for the current month and for each month in the past year. Information on PAGE 1 also appears on PAGE 2 (shown below) in more detail.

CURRENT WATER CHARGES

These cover the cost of providing freshwater which flows into your property, be it for drinking, bathing, washing dishes or watering your garden.

WATER USAGE

This is the amount charged for freshwater. It is broken down by CCF. One CCF = 100 cubic feet or about 748 gallons of water.

WATER SERVICE CHARGE

This is a fixed monthly charge based on the size of your water meter and covers the cost of your billing and customer service.

Account Information

Account Name [REDACTED]
 Account [REDACTED]
 Service Address [REDACTED]
 Customer Class CITY RESIDENTIAL
 Service Dates 10/06/21 - 11/04/21
 Bill Date 11/22/21

Meter Information

Meter Number [REDACTED]
 Meter Size 5/8"
 Meter Svc Chrg \$7.86
 Begin Read Date 10/06/21
 Beginning Read 1189
 End Read Date 11/04/21
 Ending Read 1193
 Usage 4 CCF
 Days Billed 29 Days

Drainage Information

Conversion - 1 acre equals 43,560 sq ft
 Parcel Number [REDACTED]
 Total Acres 0.18
 Impervious Acres 0.06

PAGE 2

November Bill Details

Previous Balance \$78.32
 Payments Received - *Thank you!* -\$78.32
Balance Forward \$0.00

Current Water Charges

Water Usage 4 CCF @ \$2.66 \$10.64
 Water Service Charge \$7.86 @ 1 month \$7.86
Water Subtotal \$18.50

Current Sewer Charges

Sewerage Disposal 4 CCF @ \$5.706 \$22.82
 Sewerage Service Charge \$6.54 @ 1 month \$6.54
 Drainage Charge 0.06 IA @ \$677.00 \$40.62
 Green Credit (\$10.16) @ 1 month -\$10.16
Sewer Subtotal \$59.82

Total Water & Sewer Charges \$78.32

Total Amount Due by 12/13/21

\$78.32

If you pay after the due date, a 5% penalty will be added to your next bill.

WATER METER SIZES CONSTRICT THE FLOW OF WATER TO A BUILDING

The water meter in your house is often near the street-facing wall in your basement. For most Detroit homes, the water meter electronically reports its readings to DWSD; other homes may still have estimated meter readings. Most residential meters are either 5/8" or 3/4", and occasionally as large as one inch.

IF YOU NEED TO TALK TO A REPORTER, TEXT "DETROIT" TO 67485

SEWER CHARGES

Sewer charges cover wastewater that flows away from your property—from toilet flushes and water going down a drain to rainwater running off your driveway.

SEWERAGE DISPOSAL

This is the cost to collect, treat and dispose of untreated sewage. The rate is charged for each CCF of water brought into your house and measured on your water meter. Meters don't track water leaving your property.

SEWERAGE SERVICE CHARGE

Detroiters pay a fixed monthly charge for operations and maintenance of the wastewater systems and the cost of service centers and equipment.

GREEN CREDIT

DWSD gives every residential customer an automatic 25% reduction of their drainage charge. (The drainage charge is explained on the next page of this guide.)

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TOTAL AMOUNT DUE

This is the amount you are responsible for that month. It is the sum of any Balance Forward, your Total Water and Sewer Charges, and any payment plan agreement amounts.

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR BILL OR NEED TO DISPUTE A CHARGE?

Start with the [Customer Portal](#) or call 313-267-8000 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. on weekdays. Outside of office hours, use the number for automated self-service or to report an emergency. For general information about your bill or water or sewerage services, visit the [DWSD Website](#). If you need more help text "Detroit" to 67485.

DRAINAGE CHARGES

Drainage information is listed underneath your water bill's meter information.

This fee is for treatment and disposal of stormwater or snowmelt, which runs off your home or driveway. Detroit has a combined sewer system, where the sewage leaving your home gets combined with rainwater or snowmelt entering street drains. Because it combines with untreated sewage, water runoff must be treated before being returned to the environment.

The drainage charge is calculated based on the amount of hard, impervious surface on your property. This includes the roof of your home, garage and driveways and patios. DWSD uses planes to estimate impervious surface areas. Those areas are measured in acres, and then multiplied by the rate charged per month, per acre.

You can look up how impervious surfaces are drawn out for every parcel in the city. [Click here](#) to look up a parcel by address.

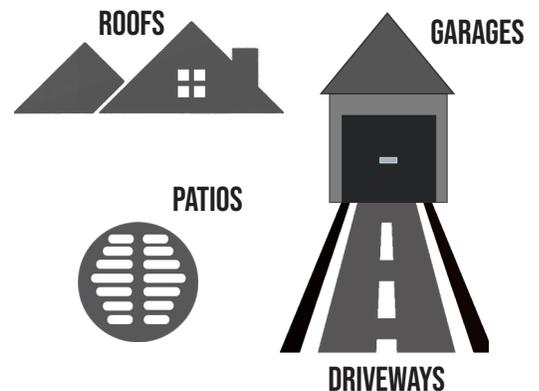
If you think your drainage fee needs to be adjusted, [fill out this form](#).

Drainage Information

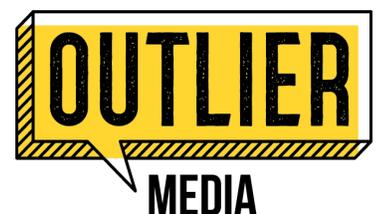
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IMPERVIOUS SURFACES OF PROPERTIES



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