

Watertown Water & Sewer Authority (WSA)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) & What This Means for Your Bill

Why am I receiving this information?

The Watertown Water & Sewer Authority is providing clear, easy-to-understand information about how your water and sewer system works and how bills are calculated.

This is part of an ongoing effort to support transparency, improve communication, and help residents better understand the system.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is the water and sewer system funded through user fees?

The WSA operates as a **self-funded utility**, meaning:

- It does not rely on property taxes
- Users pay for the service they receive

This ensures fairness and keeps funding dedicated to the system.

2. Why is my sewer bill based on my water usage?

Most properties are not directly metered for sewer discharge.

Instead:

- Water usage is used as a reasonable estimate of wastewater
 - This is a common practice across many communities
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3. How is the Town charged for sewer treatment?

The Town is billed by the City of Waterbury based on:

- The **total amount of wastewater leaving the system**
 - Measured at a single location (meter pit)
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4. What is Inflow & Infiltration (I&I)?

I&I is water that enters the sewer system but is not from normal usage, such as:

- Groundwater entering pipes
 - Stormwater from improper connections
 - Aging infrastructure leaks
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5. Why does I&I matter?

Because:

- It increases total system flow
- The Town is billed for all flow—including I&I

This can increase overall system costs.

6. Why can water and sewer costs change from year to year?

Costs can vary due to:

- Weather conditions
 - Changes in water use
 - Infrastructure conditions
 - External costs (such as water purchased from Waterbury)
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7. Why does the WSA use multi-year averages for planning?

Using multiple years of data helps:

- Avoid overreacting to unusual years

- Create more stable financial planning
 - Support predictable rates over time
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8. What are “flat fees” on my bill?

Flat fees are fixed charges that:

- Do not change based on usage
- Help cover essential system costs

These include:

- Billing and administration
 - Maintenance readiness
 - Regulatory compliance
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9. What is the Watertown Fire District’s role in the system?

The Watertown Fire District (WFD):

- Is connected to the sewer system
 - Is separately metered
 - Pays its share based on actual flow
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10. Are current estimates final or guaranteed?

No.

All financial projections are:

- Planning estimates only
 - Based on historical data
 - Subject to change based on actual conditions
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11. Will my rates increase?

No final decisions have been made.

Any potential changes would:

- Be reviewed publicly
 - Include a formal public hearing
 - Be based on updated data and analysis
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12. Where can I find more information?

Residents can review:

- Budget documents
- Public presentations
- Supporting materials

At:

www.watertownct.org

Departments → Water & Sewer

What This Means for Your Bill

Your bill has two main parts:

1. Usage Charges

- Based on how much water you use
- Also used to estimate sewer usage

2. Flat Fees

- Fixed charges
 - Help keep the system running regardless of usage
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What affects your bill?

Your bill may be influenced by:

- Your household water use
 - Seasonal usage (summer vs. winter)
 - System-wide costs (especially sewer treatment)
 - Long-term infrastructure needs
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Important to Understand

- You are billed individually
- The system operates collectively

This means:

- Overall system costs (including I&I) affect everyone
 - Infrastructure condition plays a role in long-term costs
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Why planning matters to your bill

The WSA uses long-term planning to:

- Avoid sudden rate changes
 - Maintain reliable service
 - Ensure the system remains financially stable
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What you are paying for

Your bill supports:

- Safe drinking water
 - Wastewater collection and treatment
 - Maintenance of pipes and infrastructure
 - Compliance with environmental regulations
 - Long-term system improvements
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Key Takeaways

- The system is funded by **user fees, not taxes**
- Sewer bills are based on water usage as a practical method

- System-wide conditions affect overall costs
 - Flat fees help provide stability
 - Long-term planning supports predictable and fair rates
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Final Note

This information is part of an ongoing effort to provide clear, accessible explanations of WSA operations and financial planning.

The information presented is **forward-looking**, focused on transparency, system sustainability, and informed community understanding. It is not intended to revisit past matters.

Stay Informed

Additional materials in this series include:

- Water Cost (Exhibit A – Summary)
- Water Revenue (Exhibit B – Summary)
- Sewer Cost (Exhibit C – Summary)
- Sewer Revenue (Exhibit D – Summary)

Together, these documents provide a complete picture of how the system works and how it is funded.