Setting of Residential Sewer Billings

The City calculates residential sewer customer's billings based on actual water usage during the period starting in December and ending in April (winter average) each year. Once the winter average is calculated, this usage is utilized to calculate the subsequent 6 bi-monthly sewer billings starting in June of each year.

- Winter Average is defined as the average residential customer's water usage for the two bi-monthly billing periods that start in mid-December and end in mid-April

- Winter Average best reflects the actual water usage that ends up at the wastewater treatment plant for further processing. Other water usage months most likely include irrigation and other outdoor uses that are not included in the waste stream processed by the wastewater treatment plant.

- Winter Average is primarily utilized by only residential customers. All other customer classifications utilize actual usage year round.

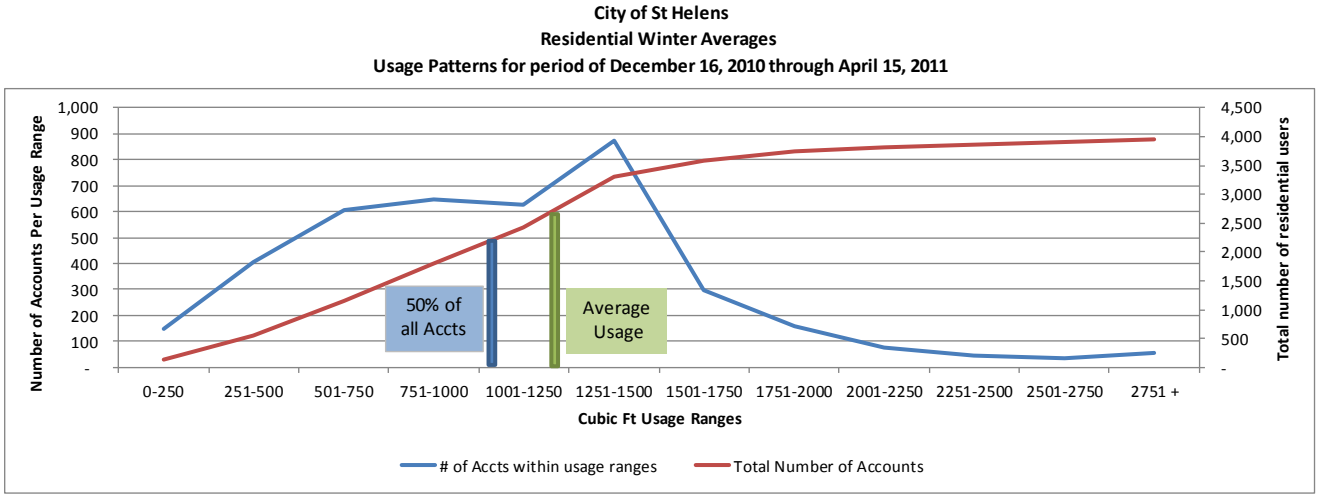
- Residential customers can request reassessment of their sewer billing. Reassessment is usually triggered by (but not limited to) either two consecutive billing cycles during June through December that are below the winter average or when leaks have been identified and corrected during the winter average setting period.

- Prior to utilizing winter average, all customers were paying a fixed amount that represented the average annual usage of all residential customers. With the implementation of winter average, 67% of all residential customers utilized the average or below usage, while 33% utilized above average water usage. This resulted in a fee that more equitably reflects the actual costs of service between residential customers.

- The City encourages all customers to reduce their utility bill through actively conserving water. Active conservation methods may include, but are not limited to low flow water devices on toilets and showers and/or limiting the amount of water used outdoors (i.e. washing cars, irrigation, etc). To obtain further ideas for conservation, please reference the following web sites:

    - http://www.portlandonline.com/water/index.cfm?c=51031&
    - http://www.portlandonline.com/water/index.cfm?a=265577&c=51028
    - http://www.oregon.gov/OWRD/WR/drought_conservation.shtml#Residential_Water_Users
    - http://www.cbs.state.or.us/bcd/pdf/0990.pdf
    - http://www.waterpikecoflow.com/water-conservation-tips.html?gclid=CJjb__7Q06YCFQIBbAod02waHQ

The following graph illustrates the usage patterns of all residential customers based on the most recent winter averaging calculations and should provide additional perspective through comparison.



Volumes (CF)	0-250	251-500	501-750	751-1000	1001-1250	1251-1500	1501-1750	1751-2000	2001-2250	2251-2500	2501-2750	2751 +
# of Accts within usage ranges	148	404	604	647	627	872	295	158	77	45	32	54
Total Number of Accounts	139	543	1,147	1,794	2,421	3,293	3,588	3,746	3,823	3,868	3,900	3,954

Residential Utility Billing Comparison

The following chart provides a comparison of the average City of St. Helens residential customer's utility bill (monthly) to other jurisdictions. This study is updated annually.

Residential Utility Rate Comparison
December 2010

			Monthly Fees for Service					
Rank	**Location**	**Effective Date**	**Water** [1]	**Sewer** [2]	**Storm** [3]	**Total Utility**	**Added Fees** [5]	**Total Billing**
1	Keizer	Proposed	$16.19	$37.34	$4.10	$57.63		$57.63
2	Hillsboro	Proposed	$21.81	$32.21	$4.75	$58.77		$58.77
3	Scappoose		$32.69	$30.64	$0.00	$63.33	$7.70	$71.03
4	Dallas	April-09	$26.90	$39.00	$0.00	$65.90		$65.90
5	Beaverton	July-10	$30.20	$34.21	$6.75	$71.16		$71.16
6	Gresham	January-11	$39.66	$25.05	$9.20	$73.91		$73.91
	St Helens	Current	$38.20	$31.81	$7.59	$77.60		$77.60
7	McMinnville	July-10	$31.97	$46.11	$0.00	$78.08		$78.08
8	Columbia City		$54.50	$28.73	$0.00	$83.23		$83.23
9	Cornelius	July-10	$40.10	$39.18	$9.55	$88.83	$10.25	$99.08
10	St Helens	Proposed	$42.77	$42.01	$8.35	$93.13		$93.13
11	Sherwood		$51.17	$30.65	$12.27	$94.09		$94.09
12	Wilsonville		$53.63	$38.29	$3.72	$95.64	$6.92	$102.56
13	Newberg	July-10	$39.77	$55.06	$4.48	$99.31		$99.31
14	Portland [4]	July-10	$52.09	$44.98	$21.79	$118.86		$118.86
Volume Assumptions in CCF per month			10.0	6.5				

-1

[1] Residential water fees based on winter water consumption of 10 ccf. One ccf (hundred cubic feet) equals 748 gallons. Summer irrigation will exceed this average. Some cities have tiered rates or irrigation rates.

[2] Residential sewer fees for a sewer base of 6.5 ccf reflecting average residential winter water consumption.

[3] Single family residential stormwater, standardized on 1 EDU, approximately 2,500 square feet of impervious area.

[4] Does not include Superfund charges for sewer or storm.

[5] Added fees represents fixed charges added to the utility bill to cover infrastructure, public safety, or services.