

# Winter Water Averaging Fact Sheet

## Want to Lower Your Wastewater Bill? Here's How...

### **How am I billed for Service?**

There are two parts to your wastewater bill: the customer charge and the consumption charge. The customer charge is a fixed fee that you pay each month, while the consumption charge varies according to your water consumption.

**For most customers, the consumption charge is set once a year based on your winter water average.** The Consumption charge for Residential and Non-Residential customers is calculated using “winter water averaging,” a standard method to estimate wastewater consumption over an entire year. By measuring the average water usage from early December to mid-March, based on the water meter readings in January, February and March – three months when it’s cooler and there should be less landscape irrigation – we’re able to estimate the total amount of domestic (non-irrigation) water that is used by a customer. Since that domestic water ultimately ends up in the City’s wastewater system, winter water averaging is the best method for determining how much wastewater each customer produces if they don’t have a separate irrigation meter. Therefore, your wastewater bill is based on that winter average for the next 12 months.

The City recalculates the wastewater consumption charge for each customer each year in April based on average water usage during the three winter months. Customers’ bills reflect the consumption charge based on the new winter water average starting in May each year and continuing for the next 12 months.

**So if you want to reduce your wastewater bill for an entire year, turn off your irrigation system and conserve water from December 1 through March 15. If you have a pool or hot tub, wait to refill it until after March 15.**

Keep in mind that water meters are read on different days throughout the City. The date your water meter is read is noted on your water bill. There will be some December usage on your January meter reading.

**Customers with separate irrigation meters are billed on their actual monthly water usage and are not subject to winter water averaging.**

If you use a lot of water for irrigation or you have difficulty keeping track of water usage from December-March, you may want to consider installing a separate irrigation meter. Contact Travis County Water Control & Improvement District 10 at (512) 327-2230 for more information.

**What if I have a water leak or other situation which artificially increases my winter water usage? Can I get my winter water average adjusted? Possibly.**

If you provide documentation that the leak *did not* go into the wastewater system, you may qualify for an adjustment. Send an email to [ww@westlakehills.org](mailto:ww@westlakehills.org) with documentation such as service reports from a plumber or irrigation company with the circumstances for the unusually high winter water usage, and the City may approve an adjustment in the winter water average. It is very important to review your water usage monthly and to make any requests as soon as possible after you get your water usage. Please be aware that the City of Austin partially bills the City based on customers’ winter water averages, so once Austin finalizes West Lake Hills’ wastewater bill, it may not be possible to make further adjustments.