

Understanding Your Utility Bill

Your utility bill includes charges for four services:

1. Water
2. Lake Whatcom Watershed
3. Sewer
4. Stormwater

Each utility service has a fee based on the cost to provide that service to you, the utility customer. Rate studies for each utility establish the rates to cover cost of service, maintenance, and operation.

Water

Approximately 95,000 people depend on the Water Utility for safe, reliable drinking water. Water rates are based on the cost to provide drinking water.

Your water fees pay for:

- Treatment and delivery of drinking water
- Maintenance and operation of water mains, pump stations, and water meters
- Replacement of aging infrastructure
- Water-consumption data collection, processing, and billing
- Programs to maintain compliance with state and federal drinking water regulations

Terms used on the Water portion of the utility bill:

- **Water—Base Rate**
This line item recovers the cost of providing average daily water demands, meter reading and billing, and operation and maintenance of the water system.
- **Water—Consumption @ \$x.xx/ccf**
This is the amount of water used by the customer. Consumption is measured in the water industry standard of 100 cubic feet (CCF) increments: 1 CCF = 748 gallons.

Water Metering Program

State law requires that all water service connections be metered by January 2017. To meet that requirement, the City must install meters and convert billing for about 15,000 residential customers currently not on a water meter. The mandatory program began June 1, 2012, and will be complete in 2017. City staff analyzed meter reading routes, billing cycles, and installation processes to develop a cost-effective and efficient schedule for both the water utility and customers. The estimated \$10 million program cost will be paid by water utility customers through their water rates in conjunction with the variables listed above.

Water Treatment Plant Improvements

To maintain water treatment plant function and continue drinking water services, city staff recommend installing a Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF) treatment system. This system is funded through bonds repaid by all customers through water rates.

Lake Whatcom Watershed (Land Acquisition and Preservation Program)

To help ensure the quality of the City's drinking water source now and in the future, the Lake Whatcom Watershed Land Acquisition and Preservation Program provides protection throughout the Lake Whatcom Watershed. The Land Acquisition and Preservation Program is part of the long term strategy to protect our water supply.

Your Lake Whatcom Watershed fees pay for:

- Acquisition of property to preserve lake water quality
- Purchase of property for stormwater capital projects including design and construction
- Debt service on bonds from previous land acquisition, taxes, maintenance, and operation expenses

Terms used on the Lake Whatcom Watershed portion of your bill:

- **Lake Whatcom Watershed—Base Rate**
This line item refers to the fees all water customers pay for the program.
- **Lake Whatcom Watershed—Water Consumption @ \$x.xx/ccf**
The amount of water consumed by the customer as listed on the "Water" line item of the utility bill, and pro-rated to obtain the watershed fee.

Sewer

The Sewer Utility collects and treats wastewater from approximately 95,000 people. Sewer rates are also based on the cost of service.

Your sewer fees pay for:

- Conveyance and treatment of the sewage in the sewer system
- Maintenance and operation of sewer mains and lift stations
- Replacement of aging infrastructure
- Compliance with state and federal wastewater regulations

Terms used on the Sewer portion of your utility bill:

- **Sewer—Base Rate**
This is the cost of providing treatment and conveyance of sewage, wastewater treatment plant expansion, billing, operation, and maintenance of the sewer system.

- **Consumption**—sewer consumption charges, when applicable, are based on water usage measured at the water meter.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements

As the Wastewater Treatment Plant at Post Point reaches capacity for biochemical oxygen demand (the concentration of the wastewater), the City must make improvements and continue to meet wastewater regulations. These improvements are funded through bonds repaid by all customers through sewer rates.

Stormwater

Rain becomes stormwater as it travels over our yards, roads, and sidewalks, picking up fertilizer, pesticides, oil, soap, and bacteria along the way. This stormwater then flows to storm drains and ditches that empty into our lakes, streams and bays.

The Storm and Surface Water Utility (SSWU) provides programs and projects to aid in the prevention and cleanup of water pollution and flooding throughout the City, to ensure the health and safety of citizens and to protect the natural environment.

Your stormwater fees pay for:

- Maintenance and operation of the City's stormwater system
- Replacement of existing facilities and construction of new facilities
- Flood control, improved water quality, and enhanced fish habitat
- Compliance with state and federal water resource regulations

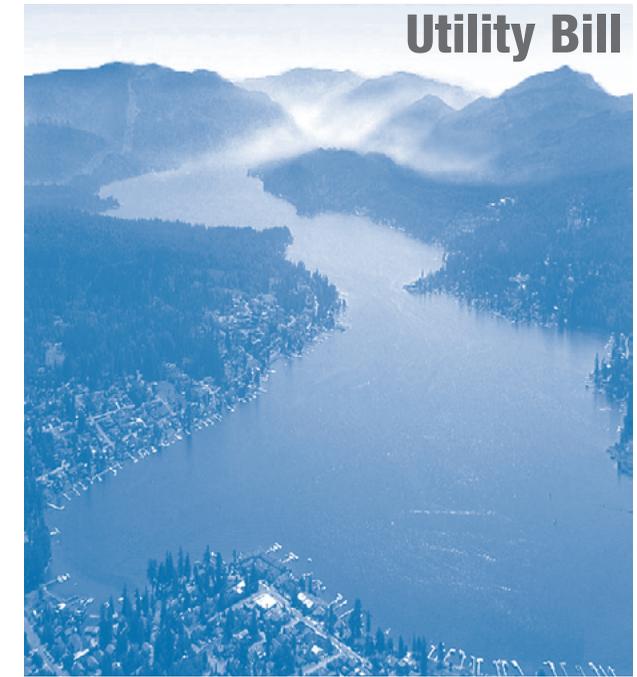
Stormwater terms on your utility bill:

Impervious surface is used to quantify the impact of stormwater on the environment and on our drainage systems.

- **Stormwater Footprint (Small, Medium, Large)**
This information separates single family residential properties into one of three rate categories based on the size of the house plus garage as defined by the Whatcom County Assessor database.
- **Small Footprints** have a footprint area between 300 and 1,000 square feet.
- **Medium Footprints** are between 1,000 and 3,000 square feet.
- **Large Footprints** have a house plus garage area greater than 3,000 square feet.
Small-and medium-footprint residential properties pay flat fees. All other properties pay fees based on the total amount of impervious surface.

Water • Lake Whatcom Watershed Sewer • Stormwater

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SAMPLE

UTILITY BILL STATEMENT

Customer: JANE SAMPLE

Customer Number: 00001234

| Bill Date | Due Date | Billing Cycle | Previous Amount Due | Payments | Current Activity | Total Amount Due |
|-----------|----------|---------------------|---------------------|----------|------------------|------------------|
| 01/13/13 | 02/05/13 | 11/05/12 - 01/12/13 | 000.00 | -000.00 | 000.00 | 000.00 |

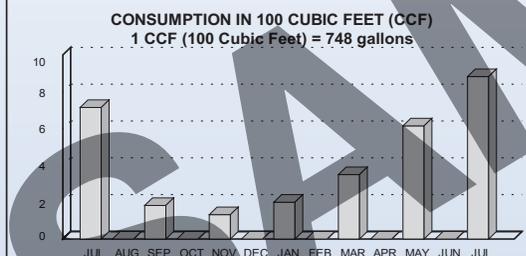
| Date | Transaction Type | Detail Description | Amount |
|----------|---------------------|--------------------|---------|
| 11/05/12 | Previous Balance | | 000.00 |
| 12/02/12 | Payment - thank you | | -000.00 |

9876 CASCADE RD

Parcel # 380318014475
Impervious Sq. Ft.

01/12/13 Billing

Water - Base Rate
Water - Consumption @ \$1.58/ccf
Lake Whatcom Watershed
Sewer
Stormwater - Medium Footprint



| CURRENT READ DATE | METER SIZE | PREVIOUS READ | CURRENT READ | CONSUMPTION CCF |
|-------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 01/04/13 | 5/8" | 15 | 23 | 8 |

TOTAL AMOUNT DUE 000.00

Check the message box for important changes and new information.

PLEASE DETACH HERE AND RETURN THIS PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT

| Customer | Bill Date | Due Date | Total Amount Due |
|----------|-----------|----------|------------------|
| 00001234 | 01/13/13 | 02/05/13 | \$000.00 |

| AMOUNT ENCLOSED | |
|-----------------|----|
| \$ | 14 |

Please make checks payable to the City Finance Director and return with coupon in enclosed envelope.

CITY OF BELLINGHAM - UTILITY PAYMENT, P.O. BOX 35012, SEATTLE, WA 98124-3412

If payment is not received on or before due date, a late charge will be assessed.

Check here for change of address or phone number and indicate changes on reverse side.

Jane Sample
9876 Cascade Rd
Bellingham, WA 98225

13

35012 99999997 000000014359 8

- 1 Customer Number** – Each customer has an identifying number which links them to their service account. If you own more than one property you will have more than one customer number. Your customer number and last name are needed to make payments online.
- 2 Bill Date** – This is the date your bill was produced. Your due date is calculated from this date.
- 3 Due Date** – This is the date your payment is due. The due date for unmetered utility service is 29 days from the bill date. The due date for metered service is 22 days from the bill date. If you are an Autopay customer, the total amount due will be deducted from your bank account on the due date.
- 4 Billing Cycle** – This is the range of dates for the current billing period.
- 5 Total Amount Due** – This is the amount that is due on or before the due date.
- 6 Service Location** – This is the address of the property where utility services are provided.
- 7 Parcel Number** – The parcel number is a unique identifying number to define individual properties. It is a combination of township, range and section with a six-number system that identifies the center of the property within the section.
- 8 Impervious Square Footage** – This is the area on a property that contains concrete, asphalt, gravel parking, sidewalks, buildings or any other material that prevents water from being absorbed into soil. If this area is blank on your bill, you fall into a small or medium footprint billing category.
 - 8a) Small Footprint – single family residence properties with a building and carport or garage between 300-1000 square feet.
 - 8b) Medium Footprint – single family residence with a building and carport or garage between 1000-3000 square feet.
 - 8c) Impervious Square Footage – single family residence and commercial properties greater than 3000 square feet.
- 9 Current Activity** –
 - Water
 - Watershed
 - Sewer
 - Stormwater

Each city utility service you receive is listed in the Current Activity detail section of your bill. If your water service is metered, consumption charges are shown separately from the base rate. The Lake Whatcom Watershed Land Acquisition & Preservation Program charges are itemized separately from the water service charges. Additional explanation of these is on the reverse side. Individual bills will vary from this sample.
- 10 Consumption History** – This usage graph allows you to compare your utility usage throughout the year.
- 11 Notes & Message Section** – Look here for important information relating to City utilities.
- 12 Statement Section** – Keep this section for your records.
- 13 Remittance Stub** – Detach and include with your payment in the return envelope enclosed for your convenience. If you choose to mail your payment, the payment will be processed by the City's lockbox processing center in Seattle, WA.
- 14 Amount Enclosed Section** – If the word Autopay appears in this box you are enrolled in our Autopay program. If the box is blank, please write in the amount you are enclosing for payment.