



City of Phoenix
WATER SERVICES DEPARTMENT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

New Municipal Services Bill

1. Why is the Municipal Services Bill changing?

The Municipal Services Bill is changing along with the billing system that produces the bills. The billing system and bill format are both nearly 30 years old, and both needed to be brought to modern standards.

2. How do the new bill and billing system benefit customers?

The new bill is easier to read; shows the most recent payment received; contains a usage history graph that enables you to track your water consumption; more prominently shows informational messages; provides more-detailed charges; and allows any amount to be donated to Project Assist. Also, because it is now printed on standard sized paper, it is less costly to produce. (In the future look for other new time and money saving features such as e-billing, paperless billing and consolidated bills for multiple accounts.) The new billing system replaces some manual tasks, enabling staff to work more efficiently and communicate more promptly with you via letters, data, and field work requests.

3. Why is the city making this change at this time?

This replacement project began in June 2005, prior to the economic downturn. Also, technology has changed a great deal since the old billing system was designed 29 years ago, making it outdated and costly to use. The old system did not enable us to provide customers with the service and information they have been requesting.

4. Does the bill have new fees or charges?

No. There are no new fees or charges on the new bill. In fact, the new bill displays all fees and charges in a more itemized formatted for ease of understanding. Two of those fees are listed as Environmental Mandates. Basically, they show what you pay for the city to comply with environmental laws and regulations for water and sewer services. These fees were implemented in 1992.

Two other itemized fees previously were listed together as State and Other Fees. The first, State Mandated Jail Costs, started in 1991 because Phoenix does not operate its own jails. The city collects this money to pay Maricopa County to house inmates that are arrested in Phoenix, as well as to pay the costs for State mandated jail sentences. The second, State Landfill Disposal Fee, pays the State of Arizona for solid waste disposal, and was implemented in 1992.

5. My bill doesn't show my water usage graph like the example?

If you are a new customer and have no water consumption on record, then no bar graphs will appear on your bill.

6. Why doesn't the water consumption graph show a comparison to last year?

After one year of consumption has been recorded in the new billing system, the graph will then begin showing the two years that can be used as a comparison.

7. My account number is different on the new bill, is that correct?

Yes. The new billing system uses a new account number format. Customers should take note of the new number and use it on all payment transactions in regards their account.

8. I have been paying my water bill through the automatic withdrawal "SurePay" method for several years. Is there anything customers need to do in regards to the new bill and billing system and the new format for the account number?

Customers who are currently using the SurePay system to pay their bills will need to do nothing. Phoenix Customer Services staff will take the necessary steps to make sure your payment continues to be withdrawn from your account.

9. I have been paying my Municipal Services Bill through the bill payment tool offered by my banking institution on their website, is there anything customers need to do to make sure that the payments continue to get made?

Because the city's new billing system uses a new account number format, customers will need to update their information with their bank or credit union by March 1, 2010 to make sure that the payments they make are accurately credited to their city account.