

SEWER SERVICE CHARGE ADJUSTMENT POLICY

Sewer Service Charges

1. A sewer service charge is levied and charged upon each premise which discharges sewage that ultimately passes through the City's sewer system.
2. The property owner of record shall be responsible for payment of the sewer service charge. Any agreement between landlords and tenants to the contrary will not relieve the landlord or record owner of the property of the responsibility for payment of the sewer service charges to the City.
3. The property owner of record at the time the sewer service charge is billed shall be responsible for the sewer service charge associated with the metered water use occurring during the time period which serves as the basis for billing.
4. Sewer service charges will be determined by applying the volume charge per hundred cubic feet (HCF) for each customer classification to each premises as determined by the water utility meter readings taken as an average of the four winter months from the previous five years, and adding the amount of the base charge.
5. A bi-monthly billing cap of 28 units is applied to single family residential sewer customers. The maximum FY23 single family sewer bill is equal to \$156.32 bi-monthly or \$937.92 per year. Single family sewer charges MAY NOT exceed the maximum bill amount per account per year.
6. Payment for sewer service charges for new connections is made at the time the building permit is paid. If the permit is for new construction or connection, then a time credit of four months shall be allowed when computing the amount of the sewer service charges due between the day of application and the next billing in which the account can be included on the tax roll.

Exceptions

Exceptions to sewer service charges must be requested in writing by the property owner using the adjustment request form. The City may allow exceptions for the following circumstances:

1. An adjustment may be made in such cases when ownership of the parcel changes after the period during which the water meter readings are recorded and the amount of the water used during that period is above the median winter water use for that customer classification. It must be positively demonstrated by the customer that the recorded amount is not representative of their actual consumption for the type of use. In such cases, the customer will be set at the citywide average usage for that customer classification.
2. In cases where there is abnormal and excessive winter water consumption caused by unknown water pipe leak and it is positively demonstrated to the satisfaction of the city that the above-mentioned water consumption is not discharged into the sewer system, an adjustment may be made to exclude the abnormal meter reading from the winter water average calculation.
3. New customers with no established winter water consumption history may be set at the five-year citywide average winter water use by customer classification. The average bi-monthly winter water use for single family customer accounts is equal to 14 HCF.

Average Bill Calculation (based on FY23 sewer service rates) - 14 HCF x \$4.20 = \$58.80. \$58.80 + base charge of \$38.72 = \$97.52 bi-monthly x 6 = \$585.12 per year. A unit is equal to one hundred cubic feet (HCF) of water. One hundred cubic feet of water is equal to 748 gallons. These exceptions will remain until there is one complete winter's worth of consumption data at which time the actual data will be used to compute the sewer charges.

4. Adjustments may be made due to a change and assignment of proper Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Codes to commercial properties based on sewer strengths of the businesses occupying the properties. Water usage should be based on five-year average winter water consumption if available. If it is demonstrated that the five-year average usage is not representative of the usage as reclassified, the citywide average winter usage for that customer classification may be used.
5. Existing commercial customers that do not have separate irrigation meters and have made significant consumption adjustments through landscaping and irrigation changes or some other documented water savings improvements may request an exception. There must be at least one winter's worth of water consumption data to validate this request.

La Mesa Municipal Code Section 17.12.040 – Exceptions

Sewer service charge exceptions are allowed as provided in Municipal Code Section 17.12.040.

The city manager shall have the power to grant exceptions and to establish policies for the granting of such exceptions from the established sewer service charges. Such exceptions shall only be granted when one or more of the following situations exist:

- A. Where a substantial portion of the water is used for industrial, recreational, horticultural or agricultural purposes of such a nature that less than twenty percent of the water supplied to such premises is discharged into the sewer system;
- B. Where a fire service connection to the water system is installed;
- C. Where the premises are not connected to the sewer system of the city of La Mesa and it is not physically possible or reasonably feasible to connect such premises with the city sewer system;
- D. When water is supplied to premises through a separate water meter and such water is used entirely for irrigation purposes;
- E. When water is supplied to premises by more than one water meter and one or more of such additional meters does not provide water which can be discharged into the sewer system;
- F. Where the city has entered into a separate service agreement;
- G. Abnormal winter water consumption;
- H. New customers with no established winter month's consumption history;
- I. Change and assignment of proper Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Codes to commercial properties based on sewer strengths of the businesses occupying the properties.

WINTER WATER AVERAGE USAGE BY CUSTOMER CLASSIFICATION

Average single-family winter water usage is based on FY23 consumption = 14 units bi-monthly.

Average commercial winter water usage is based on sewer strength comparison to single family.

	% of SF	Average Units	Bi-monthly Amount	Annual Charges
S1 - Low strength	100%	14	\$100.88	\$605.28
S2 - Medium strength	200%	28	\$217.36	\$1,304.16
S3 - High strength	250%	35	\$295.97	\$1,775.82

Bi-monthly amount and annual charges provided in the table above are based on FY23 sewer rates. Actual amounts will be determined using the most current schedule of sewer service charges.