

WASTEWATER RATES

RATE STRUCTURE

General

Because the Pueblo Wastewater Department is constituted as an enterprise under the Colorado Constitution, our wastewater rates must recover the costs of:

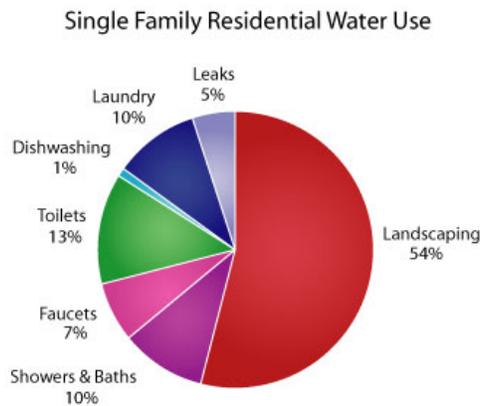
- Maintaining capability to serve
- Maintaining capacity
- Operating costs
- Maintenance costs
- Salaries



Residential Rates

Pueblo's wastewater rates are driven entirely by federal and state regulation. The monthly wastewater user charge has two components.

- The **FIXED MONTHLY FEE** funds the City's maintenance of the wastewater system including sewer pipes, pump stations, and the Water Reclamation Facility. The fixed fee maintains the capability to serve and allows the City to maintain adequate capacity. The amount of the fixed monthly fee is based on the size of the water meter.
- The **VOLUME CHARGE** reflects the amount of wastewater generated by individual users. For residences, the volume charge is based on winter water usage. During the winter, outdoor uses of water are expected to be at a minimum.



Therefore the residential winter water volume usage represents the volume of water that goes to the sanitary sewer system via household drains throughout the year. It eliminates large-volume outdoor uses for irrigation, washing cars, etc. This is the most common method of assigning volume charges for wastewater used throughout the nation.

Most operating costs related to wastewater treatment are fixed costs that do not vary greatly according to the volume of wastewater being treated. Pumps must be sized to handle the maximum volume of flow, and when the pump runs it draws a constant amount of electricity.

<http://www.pueblo.us/index.aspx?nid=170> Title 16, Chapter 6

Commercial/Industrial Rates

Commercial and industrial wastewater rates are also based on water meter size. Commercial and industrial customers are billed for the volume of water used each month. Limited allowances are available for consumptive use of water and for irrigation.

Surcharges

Some sewer users are required to pay surcharges because of the characteristics of their waste streams.

- **HIGH-STRENGTH WASTES** are wastes with an unusually high content of dissolved organic matter. These wastes impose additional treatment costs in the form of additional electricity and treatment chemical usage, and these extra costs are captured through higher wastewater rates.
- **SUSPENDED SOLIDS** are organic particulates in the waste stream. High suspended solids impose higher operating costs on the sanitary sewer system as well as on the treatment facility. These extra costs are captured through higher wastewater rates.

System Development Fees

The City of Pueblo requires that “growth pay its own way.” The cost of extending infrastructure to serve new developments is to be borne by the developer, not by existing City residents. Developers are required to finance the construction of sewer extensions. Two wastewater fees support the City’s need to maintain capacity and the capability to serve.

- The **TAP FEE** (referenced in the Municipal Code as the Sanitary Sewer Collection System Improvement Fund) funds capacity expansions in the existing sanitary sewer system that are driven by growth. The tap fee is collected at the time a building permit is issued.
- The **PLANT INVESTMENT FEE** funds capacity expansions in the Water Reclamation Facility that are driven by growth. The plant investment fee is collected at the time a building permit is issued.