



INTRODUCTION

Water is a limited resource. Much research is going into discovering ways to find and create more potable water to sustain our living environment. Besides water being a limited resource, the cost of providing clean water is expensive. Thus, finding ways to reduce water consumption will be beneficial to both the environment and our pockets.

Effective April 1, 2009, your water bill will be calculated on a new rate structure. The rates have been redesigned to promote taking responsibility for our water usage. The conservation of our limited water supply strongly relies on our decision to do so. By following watering guidelines set by the South Florida Water Management District, along with adapting to some or all of the water saving tips provided, we can all do our part in conserving water for the near and distant future.

Here are some frequently asked questions that will help you to better understand the new rate increase, how you can take control of your water usage, and other useful information.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Why are my water rates going up April 1st?

The City of Coconut Creek Water and Wastewater Utility is facing several challenges due to the current economic and operational environment. A comprehensive rate study was conducted during 2008 to address:

- Annual rate adjustments that have not kept up with inflation. They were only 1.5% in each year of 2005, 2006, 2007, and 0% in 2008.
- About 50% of the Utility's annual operating expenses are paid to Broward County (the City has an agreement with Broward County to provide water and wastewater treatment services). These costs have increased about 20% since Fiscal Year 2006, despite reductions in water demand and wastewater flow from the City.

- Increased water conservation awareness and watering restrictions imposed by the South Florida Water Management District have successfully reduced demand for water. These demand reductions reduce the Utility's operating expenses to a limited degree, however, it is more than offset by the rate increases from Broward County.
- Further contributing to lower revenues is the reduced rate of new development/customer growth as well as a loss of customers. New development has essentially slowed to a stop due to a lagging economy and mortgage lending crisis, which has also resulted in many homes throughout the City being vacant as they remain on the market.

Why is it important to conserve water?

Most of us take for granted a supply of good, fresh water. We meet our daily needs when we turn on the faucet and get seemingly unlimited running water. However, this situation has been changing as more and more communities face water shortages. Water shortages are certainly inconvenient and even scary. At first, they are hard to understand when we know that the US daily rainfall equals 4.2 trillion gallons. However, water is not always located where and when it is needed and demand keeps increasing. In the last 30 years, US demand for water has grown faster than our ability to find new water sources.



During this period while our population grew 52%, total water use tripled. Water shortages are real, touching many US communities each year. Because water conservation is a good defense against shortages, it should happen all the time, not just when shortages occur.

To begin conserving water, everyone should realize that:

- Water is a limited resource.
- Water costs a great deal in energy and money to pump, move, and purify.
- Water consumption can be reduced significantly in the average home.

Why is my water consumption high?

Once water passes through your water meter, the homeowner becomes responsible for the water and the City has no way of knowing how the water was consumed. What we do know is that the average family of four uses 6,000 gallons of water a month for indoor use.

The amount of irrigation depends on the frequency and length of time of watering. Lawns only need watering once every three days in the summer and once every seven days in the winter. Rain can reduce the number of times a lawn needs to be watered.

There are generally two reasons for ongoing high consumption: **LEAKS and IRRIGATION.**

Leaks:

There are many types of leaks: toilet leaks, leaky faucets, pipe leaks within walls or under the house foundation, pool leaks and leaks in the irrigation line including broken sprinkler heads.

Leaks can start as unnoticeably small and gradually become larger over time. **Leaks do not go away on their own and require your immediate attention.**

Consumption that spikes temporarily is probably caused by other types of consumption, such as pressure cleaning or filling a pool.

Irrigation:

Irrigation consumes significant amounts of water. Lawns do not require to be watered every day. Most lawns need about 3/4 to 1 inch of water per week, or every two weeks when the weather cools. To determine how long you must run your sprinklers to adequately water your lawn, place containers around the yard and measure the water collected in a half hour. Then you can adjust your sprinkling time to just what you need. Water can come from rain or from irrigation. Infrequent but deep watering will encourage deep rooting, healthier and hardier plants with a greater tolerance for drought. Water early in the day, especially in warmer weather, when evaporation rates are lowest, unless water restrictions specify differently. Also, your lawn needs watering when:

- Grass blades are folded in half
- Grass blades are blue-gray
- Your footprint remains on the lawn

Take Control of Your Water Bill

and other useful information



Other common causes for high consumption:

- Pressure cleaning
- Filling a pool
- Washing vehicles
- Lots of laundry loads
- Long showers
- Consumer waste



How much water is consumed by different activities?

Activity	Typical Usage	Water-Saving Habits (and how much water can be saved)
Showering	25-50 gal. (5-10 gal./min., 5-min shower)	5 gal. (wet down, soap up, rinse off)
Tub Bathing	35 gal. (full level)	10-12 gal. (low level)
Toilet Flushing	30-35 gal. (6-7 gal./flush; avg. 5 flushes/day)	15-20 gal. (tank-displacement or half-flush devices)

Activity	Typical Usage	Water-Saving Habits (and how much water can be saved)
Teeth Brushing	2 gal. (tap running continually)	1 pint (wet brush; rinse briefly)
Hand Washing	2 gal. (tap running)	1 gal. (fill basin; rinse briefly)
Shaving	3-5 gal. (tap running)	1 gal. (fill basin; rinse)

Activity	Typical Usage	Water-Saving Habits (and how much water can be saved)
Dishwashing	20 gal. (hand washing)	9-12 gal. (dishwasher)
Laundry	33 gal. (conventional washer)	15 gal. (Energy Star washer)
Car Washing	500 gal. (do it yourself)	32 gal. (a car wash)

What are some ways that I can reduce water consumption?

- Fixing leaks and replacing old plumbing fixtures with water saving ones could save a family of four 30,000 gallons of water a year.
- Leaky toilets can waste approximately 200 gallons of water each day. Add food coloring to the tank to determine if there is a leak. If color appears in the bowl, there is a leak.
- Install displacement devices in toilets. They fit easily inside your toilet tank and reduce the volume of water used in each flush. Water consumption can decrease by 50% for each flush.
- Operate automatic dishwashers and clothes washers only when they are fully loaded or properly set the water level for the size of load you are using.
- Do not use running water to thaw meat or other frozen foods. Defrost food overnight in the refrigerator or by using the defrost setting on your microwave.
- Retrofit all wasteful household faucets by installing aerators with flow restrictors. Water consumption can decrease by 13% for each aerator installed.
- Check your water meter periodically. Your water meter indicates the amount of water consumed and if there are any possible leaks from the meter to within your home.
- Place a nozzle on your hose to control the flow of water so that you only use what you need.
- Time your showers to keep them under five minutes and install ultra low-flow showerheads. The older the showerhead, the more water it uses. New showerheads deliver 2.5 gallons of water per minute, while older ones can use up to 9 gallons per minute.
- Place a bucket in the shower to catch excess water to water plants.
- Raise your lawn mower blade to its highest setting. This will encourage grass roots to grow deeper and hold moisture longer.
- Install water softening systems only when necessary. Turn softeners off while on vacation.

How are sewer charges calculated?

For single family homes, sewer consumption is determined based on water consumption. However, sewer usage is capped at 10,000 gallons per month. Thus, if you consume 8,000 gallons of water, you will be billed for 8,000 gallons for sewer, but if you consume 13,000 gallons of water, you will be billed for 10,000 gallons of sewer.

For multifamily, commercial, and industrial accounts, sewer consumption is determined based on water consumption. There is no cap for these accounts.

How can I determine if there is a leak?



First, ensure you are not using any water in the house, i.e. washing machine and dishwasher are not running, faucets are off, etc.

Then, locate your meter box. Most meter boxes are located on the ground at the edge of the property line. The meter box will have a metal gray or dark green/black lid.

Next, locate the dial on the meter inside the meter box, which looks similar to the face of a wrist watch.

If the indicator on the register dial is turning at this time, there may be a leak. To isolate whether the leak is inside or outside your home, turn off the house valve and if the dial stops turning the problem would be inside the house. If the dial continues to run, the problem would be outside between the meter box and the house valve.

How can I make my payment?

Payments can be:

- Mailed to PO Box 970907, Coconut Creek, FL 33097-0907
- Made online at www.coconutcreek.net with a Visa or MasterCard
- Placed in the drop box in front of City Hall
- Brought directly to City Hall: 4800 West Copans Road in the form of cash, check, Visa or MasterCard
- Made by automatic debit from your bank account once you have applied for the Automatic Funds Transfer (AFT) Program



4800 West Copans Road
Coconut Creek, FL 33063

Visit us online at
www.coconutcreek.net
or in City Hall
Monday-Thursday 7am-6pm

Important Telephone Numbers

Utility Billing (954) 973-6732
City Hall Main (954) 973-6770
After hours water services (954) 973-6742

Also visit
South Florida Water
Management District's website at
www.sfwmd.gov
for more useful information

