CUSTOMER SERVICE GUIDE

City of Columbus
Department of Public Utilities

Michael B. Coleman, Mayor
Tatyana Arsh, P.E., Director

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES CONTACT INFORMATION

The **311 Call Center** is the single point of contact for requesting *all* non-emergency city services. Just dial **3-1-1 or 645-3111**. Or visit online at www.311.columbus.gov.

Fire/Police Emergencies 911

DIVISION OF POWER AND WATER

WATER SECTION

Customer Service 645-8270
Monday - Friday, 7:00 am - 6 pm.
(Water/sewer billing questions, meter service, etc.)
Hearing impaired/TTY-TDD 645-7188
Water Emergency Service After Hours 645-7788
(Main water breaks, knocked over/leaking hydrant)
Water Backflow Prevention 645-6674
Water Quality Assurance Lab 645-7691
(Drinking water questions)

POWER SECTION

Customer Service 645-7360
(Billing questions for city electric customers; Limited service area - see page 22)
New Account Information 645-7216
Street Light & Electric Outages 645-7627
AEP Customers (800) 277-2177
(Non-city electric customers)

DIVISION OF SEWERAGE & DRAINAGE

Sewer Maintenance (24-Hours) 645-7102
Sewer backups, overflows, street flooding etc.

www.utilities.columbus.gov

Utilities Mission Statement

To enhance the quality of life, now and into the future, for people living, working and raising families in central Ohio through the economic, efficient, and environmentally responsible stewardship of superior public utilities.

GET GREEN COLUMBUS

The City of Columbus launched an environmental initiative known as Get Green Columbus in January 2005. Mayor Michael B. Coleman's visionary approach creates a framework for pursuing responsible environmental stewardship. It draws together city agencies, community leaders, residents, businesses and developers committed to achieving an environmentally sustainable city that meets today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. To learn more, please visit the website at www.getgreencolumbus.com.

The Department of Public Utilities is doing its part to make Columbus a green community. The department is striving to create the highest quality of life possible for residents now and in the future, and to serve as a role model for the private sector and the public at large.

Projects that contain green components include:

- Natural Landscaping Prairie Project
- Community Watershed Stewardship Program
- Com-Til Compost
- Green Fleet & Green Power
- We All Live Downstream
- Storm Drain Marker Program
- Solar Power at the Africentric School
- 5th Avenue Dam Project

For more information on these projects, please visit our website at www.utilities.columbus.gov; click on the "Conservation and Environmental Stewardship" link in the left column. See pages 25 - the back cover for conservation tips you can practice at home.

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LOW-INCOME DISCOUNT

With the leadership of Mayor Coleman and our City Council partners, a Low Income Discount Program was created in 2006 to lift some of the burden off ratepayers who have the greatest challenges making ends meet. Water and sewer customers who already qualify for a variety of state and federal low income programs are eligible for discounts of 15 percent off their utility bill. A total of 2,221 ratepayers qualified for the program in its first year. Call 645-8270 for details, or visit www.utilities.columbus.gov.

SENIOR DISCOUNT

A discount on both water and electricity bills is available to low-income seniors who meet eligibility requirements. Call customer service at 645-8270 for details, or check online at www.utilities.columbus.gov.

AUXILIARY METERS

Auxiliary meters can reduce a sewer bill if a high volume of water is used outside that does not enter the sanitary sewer system. For additional information about auxillary meters, see page 14.

CONSUMPTION

Don't forget that water and sewer charges are based on how much water is consumed, so the easiest way to lower your bill is by controlling how much water is used. See pages 26 - 27 for water conservation tips, page 28 for information about Com-til Compost for your landscaping needs, and the back cover for a comparison chart of water usage and savings.

Additional conservation tips can be found online at www.utilities.columbus.gov; click on "Conservation and Environmental Stewardship" in the left column, then select "Conservation Tips" in the center column Features section.

To open or close a Water, Sewer and Stormwater Utility account, call: 645-8270 (M - F; 7am - 6pm).

BILL PAYMENT OPTIONS

Columbus water and sewer bills can be paid by mail, on-line, or at the locations listed below. Please include your bill stub and account number. Cash, checks, money orders and credit cards are accepted for payment. Please do not put cash in the night depository box. **If your door has been tagged for nonpayment, you must call 645-8270 to stop termination of water service.**

- **Utilities Complex, 910 Dublin Road**
  7:30 AM - 5:00 PM. After-hours payments can be dropped at the night depository box near the front gate (checks or money orders only). Payments may take up to two business days to post.
- **City Hall Treasurer's Office, 90 W. Broad St.**
  8:00 AM - 4:30 PM and after-hours at the depository box by the southeast entrance (checks or money orders only). Payments may take up to two business days to post.
- **On-line at www.utilities.columbus.gov** or by calling 645-8270 (M - F; 7am - 6pm). Credit cards only. A two dollar ($2.00) or two percent (2%) processing fee, whichever is greater, will be added to your payment. Payments may take up to two business days to post.
- **Other locations may be available.**
  Please check the web site for a current list or call 645-8270.

COLUMBUS ELECTRICITY SERVICE

Please see pages 22-25.

OTHER UTILITY PROVIDERS

Columbia Gas	(800) 344-4077
American Electric Power	(800) 277-2177

For other city services, call 311 or 645-3111.

OPENING & CLOSING ACCOUNTS

If you are moving and need to **open or close** an account, please call 645-8270 to notify Customer Service and request a final inside meter reading.

DUE DATES AND PENALTY CHARGES

Residential accounts are billed quarterly. Most commercial accounts are billed monthly. Payments are due 28 days after the billing date. If payment is not received by the due date, a ten percent (10%) late charge is added to the account and a delinquent bill is mailed. The balance of all charges must be paid to avoid receiving a service termination notice. Payment arrangements may be possible - please call Customer Service at 645-8270 to request one.

SERVICE TERMINATION

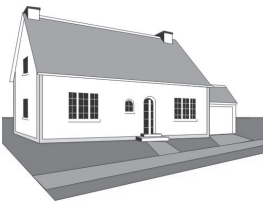
Once a bill becomes delinquent, a service termination notice is mailed. If payment is not received on or before the due date, water service at the property may be turned off on the date shown on the notice. A trip charge of $40.00 will be billed to the account if a trip is made to the property to turn off service, whether the service is terminated or not. Please be aware that the stress of turning the underground valve could cause leakage on your service line or service line connection. If this occurs, repairs are the owner's responsibility and must be inspected before water service can be restored.

If the water is turned off, service will not be restored until the next business day after the payment is received and a turn on order is scheduled. Please note: if your door has been tagged for non-payment, you must still call customer service to prevent termination once you have paid the bill. Payments can be made online (a processing fee applies) at: www.utilities.columbus.gov.

STORMWATER UTILITY FEE

All properties in Columbus that contain impervious (non-penetrable) hard surfaces such as rooftops, driveways and sidewalks are charged a Stormwater Utility Fee. Every developed property contributes to stormwater runoff. Customers are charged based on the property's contribution to the runoff from those hard surfaces. Residential properties are billed at one Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU), which is equal to 2,000 square feet. Other properties are calculated based on the amount of impervious surface known to be on the property. An example of how the charges are calculated:

$ (current rate per day) x # of days in billing period x # ERUs = $ quarterly charge.



The stormwater utility fee helps Columbus provide a variety of stormwater management services including a capital improvement program to reduce flooding in neighborhoods, water quality protection, and public education to reduce sources of surface water pollution. A separate Stormwater Utility Fee was established in 1994 in order to provide an ongoing funding source for proper stormwater management in Columbus.

For more information on stormwater ERU rates, please call 645-8270.

CONSIDER PLANTING A RAIN GARDEN

Rain gardens are bowl-shaped areas planted with native perennial plants that thrive in central Ohio soil and weather conditions. Planted in an area where stormwater is diverted from rooftops and drive-ways, the gardens capture and filter stormwater, limiting the amount of runoff and pollution entering waterways.

SPECIAL CHARGES

The Division of Power and Water charges a fee for the following services:

• Special meter reading at request of the customer, except for final bill or initial service.

• Trip to disconnect or attempt to disconnect water service due to nonpayment of overdue bill.

• To relocate metering system due to obstruction of the meter or by customer request.

• To turn water service on or off at curb box by customer request (except for repairs).

• To repair a meter damaged by customer abuse, tampering, freezing, or backflow from hot water tank.

• To investigate, notify or discontinue water service as a result of fraud or illegal diversion of water, including unauthorized turn-on or other violation of the Department of Public Utilities Director's Rules and Regulations or Columbus City Code.

• Testing of the meter at request of the customer, if meter tests within 97% and 103% of accuracy.

• Returned check processing charge.

For more information on these special charges, please call Customer Service at 645-8270.

SUBURBAN CUSTOMERS

If you live in a municipality other than Columbus you may be charged a surcharge for the contracted water and/or sewer services. All surcharge payments collected by the Division of Power and Water are remitted to the municipalities. For questions, please contact your municipal office.

UTILITY RESPONSIBILITY

The Division of Power and Water is responsible for all service and repairs of the water distribution system up to the curb shut-off valve.

The Division of Sewerage and Drainage maintains the city's sanitary sewer lines (up to the private property connection) and the public stormwater drainage system.

CUSTOMER RESPONSIBILITY

Providing access to the property for installing, reading, and maintaining the metering system.

Damage to the metering system resulting from negligence, vandalism, freezing or backflow.

Water usage for all water registered by the meter.

Installation and maintenance of auxiliary meters and remotes.

Maintenance of all water service lines from the curb shut-off valve to the inside meter setting including shut-off and bypass valve(s).

Maintenance of sanitary sewer lines from the house up to the point of its connection to the city's sewer.

Maintenance of private property stormwater lines such as the pipe from the sump pump to the curb.

If any repairs are made to the private property water or sewer service line, the Division of Power and Water/ Sewerage and Drainage must inspect these repairs to ensure they meet current City Code and construction specifications.

No repairs are to be attempted on water meters or yokes. Report these repair needs to Customer Service at 645-8270.

PROPERTY OWNER RESPONSIBILITY

Property owners are liable for all water and sewer charges incurred at their property. Direct billing is available for a tenant if the owner and tenant sign an agreement authorizing direct billing. Once the agreement is signed, bills and delinquent notices will be mailed to both the owner and tenant. Direct billing of a tenant does not relieve the property owner of liability for water and sewer charges (Columbus City Code 1105.45).

Once property ownership is transferred, by law the previous owner's unpaid sewer charges become the new owner's responsibility. The Division of Sewerage & Drainage is authorized to place sewer charges delinquent for more than 90 days on the property tax statement as a lien on the property (Ohio Revised Code 729.49 and City Code 1147.16). A ten percent (10%) service charge is added at that time. Therefore, it is advisable to check on any delinquent sewer charges before the closing of a property sale.

METER TAMPERING LAW

It is illegal in the State of Ohio to tamper with city meters or equipment (ORC 4933.19). Penalties apply for the following illegal acts:

- Interfering with or bypassing a water meter to impede or reduce correct registration of the meter.

- Reconnecting water service shut off by the city for non-payment or other reasons.

- Knowingly consuming water not correctly registered on the meter because of tampering or unlawfully reconnecting.

Anyone found guilty of these illegal acts may be subject to a maximum of five years in jail or a maximum fine of $2,500 or both. Persons convicted must also pay for the value of the water stolen and any damaged equipment.

FIND YOUR MAIN CONTROL VALVE

Almost every building has a main water control valve. In an emergency, such as a broken water line, use this valve to shut off water to the building. The main control valve should be near your water meter. If there is an emergency, you will need to act fast, so it's a good idea to mark your valve with a bright ribbon or paint, and to not block access to it so you can find it and access it quickly. Check to see that you have the correct valve by turning it off briefly and checking to see if water is off throughout the home. If the valve does not work, contact a plumber to repair or replace it. Maintenance of the main control valve is the property owner's responsibility.

FROZEN METERS AND WATER PIPES

During freezing weather, be prepared. Follow these tips to save the cost and inconvenience of replacing or repairing frozen water pipes or water meters.

- Insulate exposed pipes and faucets.

- Place a light close to the meter to warm the area.

- Open cupboard doors in bathrooms and the kitchen to get heat to pipes near outside walls.

- Winterize your house when unoccupied:

    1. Turn off the main control valve.
    2. Turn off and drain the hot water heater.
    3. Drain indoor and outdoor faucets.
    4. Flush toilets once to drain the toilet tank but not the bowl. Put antifreeze in the bowl.
    5. Leave your heat at a minimum temperature to help prevent pipes from freezing in exterior walls.

THAWING FROZEN PIPES

Do not try to thaw frozen pipes or meters with an open flame device. A hair dryer is effective and can be used safely.

If you experience loss of water service, call the Division of Power and Water's Customer Service Center at 645-8270, 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. At other times, please call 645-7788 for emergency service.

SEWER EMERGENCIES

In the event of a sewer backup into your basement from the floor drain, please notify the 24-hour Sewer Maintenance Operations Center at 645-7102. A crew will be dispatched as quickly as possible to check the city's sewer from the nearest manhole to see if it is flowing or blocked. If the incident is found to be related to a maintenance issue in the home line, you'll be advised to call a plumber. If related to a capacity problem in the city's sewer, you may qualify for a backflow prevention device to prevent future backups. To qualify for that program, known as Project Dry Basement, the backup must be reported in a timely manner for investigation. If your single or two-family home is eligible, an application will be mailed. More information about the program is available at: www.utilities.columbus.gov (click on "Flooding Information" under the Customer Service, Residential links in the left navigation panel) or call 645-5590.

If your basement floods from clear water not originating from the basement drain, such as water seepage through a wall or window, this is a private property issue that needs to be corrected by the owner. Solutions could range from simply cleaning out clogged gutters, regrading around the home, to installing a sump pump. Contact a licensed plumber for advice.

INSIDE METER VS. OUTSIDE REMOTE

Most homes have an inside meter and an outside remote register. The remote register, routinely read by Meter Readers, monitors the inside meter. The inside meter is the actual measuring device that tracks the flow of water.

At least once a year, you should read your inside meter and make sure it reads the same as your remote (refer to page 13 for guidance). If they differ by more than three digits, please report it to Customer Service at 645-8270.

Undetected remote problems often result in a large bill for water that was used over an extended period. Please help us prevent this from occurring by checking the readings and reporting any potential problems.

If you find it necessary to break the seal on your meter or remote register due to home maintenance, please contact Customer Service at 645-8270 to have our service staff reset and reseal your meter.

ENCLOSING WATER METERS

A city ordinance specifies how a meter enclosure can be made. There are four requirements:

- Enclosures can be made for meter sizes up to and including 1 ½".
- The enclosure must include the stop and waste valve (main control valve).
- The opening to the enclosure must be no smaller than 3' by 3' and centered directly in front of the meter setting.
- The opening should be of the hinged door type and must allow room for a container to catch backflow water.

Meters, Kids and Pets

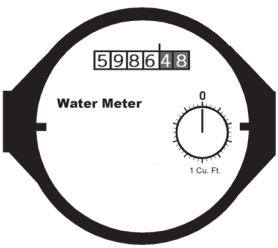
When arrangements have been made to have an inspector or meter reader enter your home, please make sure an adult is present. Also, please keep meters accessible including restraint of pets.

READING YOUR WATER METER

All meters in our service area are not the same. However, most are similar and can be read as follows:

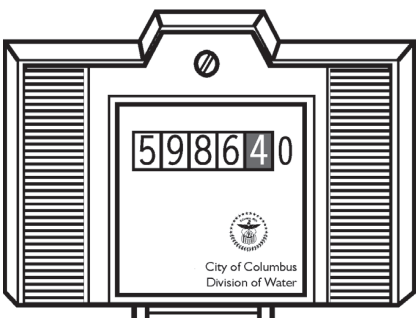
1. Locate your inside meter.

2. Record all numbers with the same color background from left to right. (In the example shown, the reading is 5,986).



3. Locate your remote register on the outside of the building.

4. Record all numbers with the same color background from left to right. (In the example below, the reading is 5,986.)



5. Subtract the remote register reading from the inside meter reading. If the difference is more than three, please report it to Customer Service at 645-8270.

AUXILIARY METERS

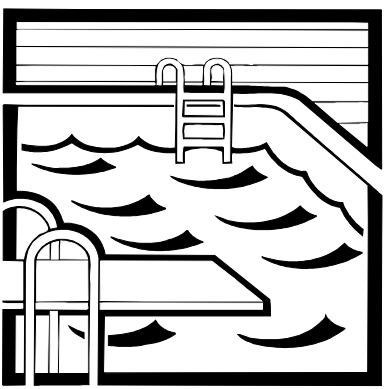
Sewer charges are based on water meter readings and assume that all the water used is discharged to the city's sewer system. Customers who use substantial amounts of water for a pool, lawn watering or other outside use may wish to install an auxiliary meter to pay sewer charges on only the water entering the sewer.

An auxiliary meter must be purchased, installed, and maintained by you or your representative. Only specific meters will be approved for usage. When the meter and remote are installed, an inspection by the city must be made to insure proper installation and to set up the account to reflect the proper sewer charges.

A $2 service charge is added to all scheduled bills for auxiliary meter customers.

For more information on auxiliary meters, call 645-8270 to request a brochure, or visit our website at www.utilities.columbus.gov/dosd/pdfs/Auxmeter.pdf.

If you have or install an irrigation system, you must contact the Division of Power and Water's Backflow Section in advance for further regulations at 645-6674. An initial inspection by a certified plumber may be required, as well as future regular inspections.



WATER BACKFLOW PREVENTION

Water in the Columbus distribution system is pumped under pressure to your property. A main line break or damage to a fire hydrant can reduce the pressure in the line and water can flow "backward" into the water system. If the water on your property is in contact with contaminants such as lawn or pool chemicals, it can, under these circumstances, contaminate the public water supply.

The Division of Power and Water ensures the safety of our drinking water through the Backflow Prevention Program. Our personnel inspect both new water services and existing facilities to identify potential backflow hazards and require the installation of backflow prevention devices where needed.

For example, when a customer has an irrigation system installed, it must have a testable backflow prevention device (ASSE 1013 or 1020) in the system. You can also purchase these devices at local hardware stores to attach to your outside faucet or other places on your property where a connection to potential contaminants exists.

If you have questions or would like to know more about the Backflow Prevention Program, please call 645-6674 or visit online at: www.utilities.columbus.gov/Water/bflow-Compliance.htm.

COLUMBUS DRINKING WATER

Columbus drinking water comes from three primary sources: Hoover Reservoir on Big Walnut Creek, Griggs and O'Shaughnessy Reservoirs on the Scioto River, and four underground wells located in southern Franklin County. Three Columbus water treatment plants serve a 500 square mile service area including Columbus and numerous surrounding suburban communities.

Hap Cremean Water Plant
4520 Morse Road - Serving the northern two-thirds of Columbus.

Dublin Road Water Plant
940 Dublin Road - Serving northwest, west and downtown.

Parsons Avenue Water Plant
5600 Parsons Avenue - Serving southeast Columbus.

At the water plants, your drinking water goes through an eight-stage, 24-hour treatment process that includes:

- Screening
- Coagulation & settling
- Softening
- PH Adjustment
- Filtration
- Taste and odor control
- Chlorination
- Fluoridation
- Corrosion control

Additional information is available online at www.utilities.columbus.gov; click on "About Us" in the left column, then select "Water Treatment Process."

Our finished water is tested every two hours and treatment adjusted so that it is of consistent quality that meets or exceeds all Ohio EPA Safe Drinking Water Standards.

The Division of Power and Water delivers an average of over 140 million gallons of water a day to an estimated service area population of over 1,083,100.

FUTURE WATER SUPPLY: UPGROUND RESERVOIR PROJECT

The decision to construct upground reservoirs to meet the water supply needs of the central Ohio area was based on the recommendations of a 10-year study of water supply planning analysis which produced the Water Beyond 2000 Feasibility Study.

The rate of water use was 140 million gallons per day (MGD) in 2006, although the system is rated for a safe yield of only 130 MGD. With continued growth projected in central Ohio, the expected demand for water soon will be 185 MGD.

A series of three reservoirs are planned for construction on 2,500 acres of land owned by the City of Columbus in northwest Delaware County. The reservoirs will be designed to provide the water supply required to meet the long-range needs for the communities served by the Columbus Department of Public Utilities and the Del-Co Water Company. In order to maintain responsible water use habits in the central Ohio service area, the City of Columbus plans to continue promoting ongoing conservation efforts.

Once complete, the three upground reservoirs will provide additional supply in excess of 53 MGD for Columbus and Del-Co Water Company consumers. Specifically, the project will supply Columbus with an additional 45 MGD and Del-Co with 8 MGD. In conjunction with the reservoir project, expansion of the well field south of Columbus is progressing and will add an additional 15 MGD.

To learn more visit our website:
www.columbusupgroundreservoirs.com

At the Water Quality Assurance Laboratory, chemists and biologists test our water supply and finished water to ensure it meets Ohio and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards. They also research new treatment and testing methods to prepare for future regulations.

To protect from waterborne diseases, a small amount of **chlorine** is added to the water at the treatment plant. EPA regulations require that a minimum of 0.2 mg/L of chlorine be present in our water distribution system. If you wish to decrease the taste and odor of chlorine in your water, fill a clean container, leave it slightly uncovered, and allow it to stand overnight in the refrigerator. The chlorine will dissipate.

Cloudy or milky looking water is usually caused by dissolved air bubbles coming out of the water, which is harmless. The air bubbles can be caused by pressure and temperature changes, water that is too hot (above 140F), and faucet aerators.

Rusty or yellow water occurs when rust deposits are stirred up by a change in water flow in pipes and main lines. Changes in flow can be caused when a water line breaks or when hydrants are flushed or used to fight fires. Rusty water will generally clear up within 2-3 hours after the line is repaired or hydrants closed. When your water is rusty, it can stain your laundry. If clothes do get stained, keep them moist, purchase a rust remover at the grocery or hardware store, and follow the directions. Try not to run your hot water faucet if rust is present since this will draw rusty water into your hot water tank.

Occasionally a **Nitrate Advisory** is issued for those served by the Dublin Road Water Plant. The Scioto River supplies water to the Dublin Road plant and during certain weather conditions, receives excessive farm runoff containing nitrates from upstream.

EPA guidelines require that we notify the public when the nitrate concentration in the tap water from any plant exceeds 10 mg/L. When the nitrate levels are above 10

mg/L they may pose a health risk to two groups:

1. Infants under six months of age who consume formula made with tap water and,
2. Persons who have been advised by their doctors to limit their intake of nitrates.

Those who are not in the two risk groups or who do not get their water from the affected water plant are not at risk.

All public water suppliers are required by the Safe Drinking Water Act to provide information about **lead** in the drinking water. Currently, the Columbus water treatment process reduces the possibility of lead contamination from residential plumbing. There is no lead in the water coming from our treatment plants. However, lead contamination can occur in the home if:

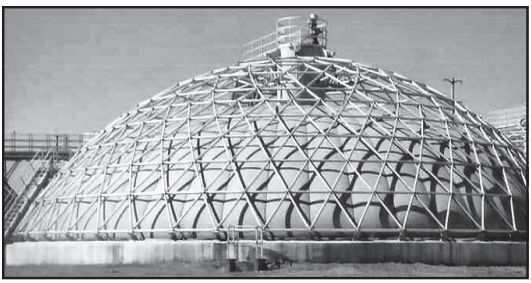
1. Your home has a lead service line (most likely in homes built before 1930).
2. Your home was built before 1986 and has copper pipes joined by tin/lead solder.

To minimize the possibility of exposure to lead after water has been standing in the pipes overnight, flush the water system until the water runs cold. These precautions are important to remember since lead (from any source) in the human body can cause damage to the red blood cells, nervous system, kidneys and brain. The highest risk groups, even to short term exposure, are children and pregnant women. For a brochure on lead, please call 645-8270 or visit online at: www.utilities.columbus.gov; click on the "News Releases and Publications" link in the left column.

For more information about water quality issues, please call the Columbus Quality Assurance Laboratory at 645-7691, or the EPA Hotline at (800) 426-4791. An annual Drinking Water Consumer Confidence Report is available online at www.utilities.columbus.gov, or call 645-8270. For additional Common Water Quality Concerns, please view the Consumer Confidence Report on our website using the above address. It can be found under the "News Releases and Publications" link in the left column.

WASTEWATER COLLECTION & TREATMENT

The Division of Sewerage and Drainage provides wastewater collection and treatment for Columbus and 22 contracted communities. The division maintains over 5,474 miles of storm, sanitary and combined sewers that make up the Columbus collection system.



Wastewater from the Columbus metropolitan area flows mostly by gravity to one of two treatment plants located on the Scioto River: the Jackson Pike and Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plants. Together, they treat an average of about 171 million gallons per day. After pollutants are removed through a biological process, the clean water is returned to the river. The discharged water, called "effluent," must meet all Ohio EPA permit standards. To learn more about the treatment process, visit online at www.utilities.columbus.gov; click on "Wastewater Treatment" under the "About Us" link in the left column.

Tours of the plants are available by appointment. If interested, please call:

- Jackson Pike: 645-3138 (2104 Jackson Pike)
- Southerly: 645-3248 (6977 South High Street)

Sewer charges are higher than water because of the more extensive process to remove pollutants in wastewater. Water and sewer charges are based on how much water is used, so the easiest way to lower your bill is to control how much water is used. See pages 26 - the inside back cover for water conservation tips; see the outside back cover for a comparison chart of water usage and savings.

Columbus' Wet Weather Management Plan

The Columbus sewer system capacity is adequate during dry weather, but is inadequate during heavy rains, sometimes causing overflows into waterways and backups into basements. To address the problem, Columbus entered into two agreements with the State of Ohio: one in 2002 to stop sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) and another in 2004 to reduce combined sewer overflows (CSOs). As a result, a Wet Weather Management Plan was developed and delivered to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency in 2005. The plan includes an estimated $2.5 billion in capital improvement projects over the next 40 years. The construction of two large-diameter sewer tunnels is included in the plan, one on the east side of Columbus along Alum Creek and another along the Olentangy River. Some sewer system capacity issues are too far upstream to be solved by the new tunnels; therefore, twelve "Priority Area" neighborhoods were identified in the plan, each with individual solutions.

To help finance the massive projects to improve the Columbus sewer system, a "Clean Rivers" wet weather management plan fee was added to sewer bills beginning in 2006. Residential properties are charged for one ERU (equivalent residential unit) which is equal to 2,000 square feet of impervious (non-penetrable) surface. Non-residential properties are charged based on the amount of impervious surface on the property. For current rates, call 645-8270 or visit www.utilities.columbus.gov.

While these projects are progressing, residents do not have to wait for relief from basement backups. The **Project Dry Basement** program provides for a backflow prevention device to be installed in qualifying single or two-family homes. The Priority Area projects will address the issues in the public sewer system; Project Dry Basement is an individual household solution that is available to prevent basement backups. Please report any basement backups to 311, 645-3111 or directly to Sewer Maintenance at 645-7102 to determine if your home is eligible.

ELECTRIC SERVICE

The Columbus Division of Power and Water (DOPW) provides power to a limited service area in Columbus. For service area information, please call 645-7360 or view a service area map online at: www.utilities.columbus.gov/Electricity/ServiceArea.htm. If your area is not served by DOPW, please contact American Electric Power (AEP) at (800) 277-2177.

STREET LIGHTING

Another service the Power Section provides is the lighting of Columbus streets. The program aims to provide standard street lights to every neighborhood. Ornamental street lights are available through a petition and assessment process. For more information about the residential street lighting assessment procedure, please call 645-2191 or visit us online at www.utilities.columbus.gov/electricity/PDFs/assess06.pdf.

REPORTING MAINTENANCE NEEDS

To report a power outage within the city's service area or a street light that needs maintenance, please call 645-7627. This line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. As with all city services, the 311 Call Center may also assist; just dial 3-1-1 (or 645-3111).

DOPW is responsible for maintenance of the electric distribution system up to the meter. All service past the meter is the responsibility of the property owner. Remember to only use licensed electricians for private property wiring repairs.

ELECTRIC CUSTOMER BILLING

If you are a Columbus Power customer, you will receive a monthly bill. If a payment deadline is missed, you will receive a delinquency notice. If payment is not received within seven days of the notice, electricity will be turned off within three days. Reconnection fees apply. If you are having trouble paying your bill, call Customer Service at 645-7360 for assistance. Special consideration can be given to those with verifiable medical conditions.

PAYMENT LOCATIONS

Your Columbus Power bill can be mailed to the address on the bill or paid in person at:

- **Utilities Complex, 910 Dublin Road**
  7:30 AM - 5:00 PM and after-hours payments can be dropped at the drive-through deposit box near the front gate (checks or money orders only). Payments may take up to two business days to post.
- **City Hall Treasurer's Office, 90 W. Broad St.**
  8:00 AM - 4:30 PM and after-hours at the depository box by the southeast entrance (checks or money orders only). Payments may take up to two business days to post.

METER READING AND TAMPERING

Customers are responsible for providing access to their electric meter. Please do not block access with debris, landscaping or locked gates. If we are unable to read your meter, a card will be left for you to phone in your reading. Instruction brochures are available.

Please be aware that it is illegal for anyone to tamper with an electric meter, which can also be very dangerous. There is a $25 fee for damage or tampering to a meter. If you would like to report a suspected problem with your meter, call 645-7627.

INDOOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Electric cord: Pull the plug, not the cord, to avoid breaking the wires inside. Do not run cords under rugs. Examine cords for worn covers and broken wires (while unplugged).

Electric Outlets: Don't stick anything in an outlet other than a plug or plastic safety cap. Cover unused outlets with plastic caps. Never touch outlets or switches with wet hands.

Electric Appliances: Always unplug appliances before cleaning them and never put anything metal in a toaster that is plugged in. Keep electrical devices from coming into contact with water and away from sinks and bathtubs. Never use an appliance while standing in water or on a wet floor.

OUTDOOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Never use electrical power tools outdoors when you are wet, the ground is wet, or it's about to rain.

Stay away from substations and transformers.

Make sure ladders, antennas and other tall, metal objects do not come in contact with wires.

Never touch a fallen power line. Keep at least ten feet away and call your electric utility.

If a power line falls on your car, stay inside and wait for the electric utility to remove the wire. Tell people outside to stay away from the car. If the car catches fire, jump out with both feet at once; don't allow one foot to be in the car while the other is on the ground.

If someone comes in contact with a live, outdoor power line, call 911 immediately and your electric utility to have them turn off the power.

CONSERVE ELECTRICITY & SAVE MONEY

- Set your thermostat as low as is comfortable in the winter and as high as is comfortable in the summer.
- Clean or replace furnace filters once a month, or as needed.
- Look for the Energy Star and Energy-Guide labels for the most energy efficient equipment and appliances for your home.
- Trees can provide ample shade and help keep your home cool during the summer.
- Check for and seal drafts around windows and doors.
- Have the insulation in your home checked. Poor or little insulation is an energy waster.
- Make sure your refrigerator door seals are airtight. Vacuum the condenser coils behind it periodically.
- If you're not using a room, turn the lights off!
- Use compact fluorescent bulbs, which last longer and use less energy than incandescent bulbs.
- Lower the thermostat on your water heater. Water heaters are the third largest energy users in your home.

ENERGY USE IN YOUR HOME

Average percentages of energy use in your home:

- Heating and cooling – 44%
- Lighting, cooking and other appliances – 33%
- Water heating – 14%
- Refrigerator – 9%

Additional conservation tips can be found online at www.utilities.columbus.gov; click on "Conservation and Environmental Stewardship" in the left column, then select "Conservation Tips" in the center column Features section.

WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

WATER IS A VALUABLE RESOURCE. Please help conserve it (and save on your bill) by following these tips:

Toilets: Every time a toilet is flushed, about seven gallons of water are used. Placing a plastic bottle filled with water in the tank will help conserve water.

Showers: Most showers use five to ten gallons of water *per minute*. A partially filled tub uses less water than a long shower. A low flow shower head will also reduce consumption.

Running Water: Don't let the water run when brushing your teeth, shaving, rinsing dishes, etc.

Dishwashers: Automatic dishwashers can use up to 15 gallons per run. Try the short cycle if available.

Laundry: Most washing machines use 40 or more gallons of water per load. Save up for a full load and run a short cycle if available.

Water Saving Devices: Look for low flow fixtures or control usage by partially turning on faucets (as opposed to running the tap full blast).

Lawn Watering: Water lawns only when needed. An inch of water or rain a week is usually sufficient. For more efficient watering, use soaker hoses or sprinkler systems. If you water deeply and less frequently, the lawn will develop deeper roots and won't need to be watered as often. Early morning hours are best to avoid evaporation.

Mulch: Mulch placed around trees and plants will slow evaporation of moisture. *See page 28 for Com-Til Compost.*

Cooling Off: Instead of allowing children to run through sprinklers, consider a small wading pool.

Water Leaks: Check all faucets and toilets for leaks and attend to any repair needs.

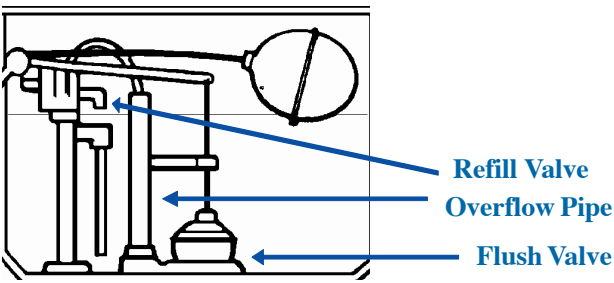
TOILET THIEF

Your toilet could be robbing you of a sizable sum of money. Large "toilet leak" water bills occur all the time; don't wait until you get one. If your toilet is robbing you, arrest it. Fix the leak, save our valuable resource and save money!

Almost all toilets work alike. The Tank contains two valves: a **flush valve** and a **refill valve.**

If the **flush valve** is out of alignment, cracked, or doesn't seal properly, water leaks continuously from the tank's bottom opening into the bowl and out the main drain. If there is a serious problem with the flush valve (it can break off or become loose) water runs out of the tank as quickly as it comes in. A serious flush valve leak consumes about three gallons a minute and can result in a huge water bill:

3 gallons X 60 minutes = 180 gallons per hour
X 24 hours = 4,320 gallons per day X 90 days = ***388,800 gallons*** *per quarter of wasted water* and *an increase of* ***$2,370.00*** *on your bill.*



If the **refill valve** is not working properly, it does not shut off the refill water at the proper time. Water fills the tank until it reaches the opening to the overflow pipe, then it silently runs down the overflow pipe into the bowl and out the main drain. An average refill valve leak consumes about 1/2 gallon per minute.

1/2 gallon X 60 minutes = 30 gallons per hour X 24 hours = 720 gallons per day X 90 days = ***64,800 gallons*** *per quarter of wasted water* and *an increase of* ***$395.00*** *on your bill.*

EXPERIENCE THE WONDER OF PLANTS GROWN WITH COM-TIL.

Com-Til is a dark, rich compost that will break up tough clay soil, add valuable organic matter, provide both macro and micro nutrients, help retain moisture and provide a decorative mulch. The product is made by recycling bio-solids from the City of Columbus wastewater treatment process with wood chips.

Com-Til is available for purchase by cash or check in bulk quantities only. Customers may use their own container or bag. Bulk material must be covered when transported. A normal pick-up truck holds about two cubic yards. Com-til is an excellent value; call 645-3153 for current prices per cubic yard.

Com-Til Sales Office:
City of Columbus Compost Facility
7000 Jackson Pike (S.R. 104)
Lockbourne, OH 43137

Hours of Operation:
Monday - Friday 7:00 AM - 3:00 PM
and other special hours as announced.

For more information, please call 645-3153 or visit our website at www.utilities.columbus.gov; click on the "Conservation and Environmental Stewardship" link in the left column and look for the Com-Til Compost feature in the center column.

IMPROVING WATER & AIR QUALITY

Partnering with local watershed groups, the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) is promoting stewardship of the source of our drinking water -- our streams and rivers. Some of these partnerships are listed below.

Rain Barrel Project: A local watershed group, Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed, has contracted with the DPU for public education projects on the use of rain barrels. When placed under a downspout, a rain barrel collects and stores rainwater for use during dry periods. Using rain water in the garden saves money and reduces the impact of stormwater runoff.

Storm Water Innovations/Rain Garden Workshops: The DPU is partnering with Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District and Friends of Big Walnut Creek in promoting public education on developing rain gardens. See page 6 for more information about rain gardens.

Pilot Prairie Project: In partnership with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's Greenways Program, the DPU has converted half an acre of its land to native prairie. The goal of the project is to create landscape plots that enhance the diversity of plant and animal life, decrease water and air pollution, reduce maintenance costs and inform residents about the benefits of this natural landscape technique.

Green Fleet:
The DPU is participating in a citywide pilot project to explore the use of diesel fuel alternatives that reduce dependence on petroleum and emit cleaner exhaust. During a trial phase, a cold weather blend of 20 percent biodiesel fuel derived from soy and 80 percent petroleum successfully powered one semitractor and three large off-road loaders at the city's Compost Facility.

To learn more, visit www.utilities.columbus.gov.

COMPARISON CHART FOR WATER USAGE AND SAVINGS

	Normal Usage		Conservation Usage		
	Gals Used	Method	Gals Used	Method	Savings
Shower (10 mins)	**50**	Shower head running continuously	**25**	Shorter showers (5 mins) ***OR***	**50%**
			25	Low flow shower head (10 min) ***OR***	**50%**
			12.5	Low flow shower head (5 min)	**75%**
Tub Bath	**36**	Standard tub, full	**18**	Standard tub, half full	**50%**
Toilet Flushing	**5-7**	Depends on tank size	**4-6**	Use a displacement bag, or milk jug in tank reservoir ***(OR)***	**20%**
			1.6	Replace with low flow toilet	**73%**
Washing Hands	**5**	With tap running continuously	**1**	Fill a standard basin	**80%**
Brushing Teeth	**10**	With tap running continuously	**1**	Wet brush with brief rinses	**90%**
Shaving	**20**	With tap running continuously	**1**	Fill a standard basin	**95%**
Washing Dishes	**30**	With tap running continuously	**10**	Wash and rinse with a half filled standard sink.	**66%**
Dishwasher	**16**	Full cycle	**7**	Short cycle	**56%**
Washing Machine	**60**	Full cycle; Highest water level	**27**	Short cycle	**55%**
Outdoor Watering	**10**	Per minute; Average garden hose	**varies**	Eliminate, night watering, etc.	**varies**

Less than 1% ***of the worlds fresh water supplies are available for human consumption.***