



# City of Independence Utilities Newsletter

January 2023: How to read your bill



## How do I read my sewer charges?

The Rock Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant, a division of Municipal Services Department, is responsible for the treatment of wastewater or what is commonly referred to as “sewer.” Each year in July, all city sewer accounts are adjusted accordingly by calculating a winter quarter and an annual average using the customer’s actual water consumption.

New residential customers who sign up for service that includes wastewater (sewer) are automatically placed on the city wide average of 6 CCF (consumption in cubic feet) for billing. One CCF is equivalent to 748 gallons.

Commercial accounts are calculated based on actual water consumption used for the month. There is also a standard industrial classification (SIC) code identified on commercial accounts which references the type of discharge they have for their business type.

### Sewer Bill Calculation Facts

Residential and commercial sewer charges are based on the customer’s water consumption. However, there are some distinct differences between the two.

Commercial accounts are calculated monthly based on water consumption for the billing period.

Residential accounts are calculated annually beginning in July and use either the Winter Quarter Average or annual average.

**City Wide Average:** Assigned to customers with a new account until an average for their household is established at the residence.

**Annual Average:** Begins with the water reading before the first of the year for the previous 12 months. For example, customers billed beginning this month on an annual average would consist of their water usage from December 2021 water reading through the November 2022 read.

**Winter Water Average:** This average is based on the January, February, and March reads of the current year.

### Calculating Sewer Charges

Sewer rates for both residential and commercial customers are located on the City’s website here, [indep.us/muniservicesrates](http://indep.us/muniservicesrates).

The sewer rate consists of three charges:

- 1. base charge,
- 1. regulatory compliance charge, and
- 3. volume charge.

The volume charge is the actual amount of water consumed.

At this time, our customers also see a regulatory compliance sewer charge on their bills. This is a mandated charge which funds additional facilities and replaces facilities and systems requiring upgrades to comply with state and federal requirements.

The volume charge x the multiplier is part of the sewer service charge. The formula listed below shows volume charges with an example of what a resident may see on their bill.

Base rate = \$18

Volume 4.5345 x 5.96 = \$27.03

Base rate (\$18) + volume (\$27.03) = \$45.03

Regulatory compliance charge (\$12) + (Base rate + volume) = Total bill of \$57.03

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# How do weather rules work in Independence?

In the December issue we gave a quick overview of the weather rules. However, we have received a few questions so this month we are providing a bit more detail on this process and the rules and regulations we follow in Independence.

The City of Independence is a municipally operated utility and is not governed by the Missouri Public Service Commission. However, we do outline our weather rules for our City of Independence Utilities in the Customer Services Rules and Regulations (found at [indep.us/utilitiescustomerservice](http://indep.us/utilitiescustomerservice)).

Here are a few sections of the Rules and Regulations that you will want to focus on related to when service may be discontinued.

## Cold Weather

The City will adhere to the following conditions regarding discontinuance of utility service during cold-weather periods:

This provision applies to **residential** customers only.

Discontinuance of **electric** utility service to all residential customers, including all residential tenants of apartment buildings, for nonpayment of bills is prohibited:

- On any day when the National Weather Service local forecast between 6 A.M. and 9 A.M. for the following 24 hours predicts that the temperature will drop below 32 degrees Fahrenheit.
- On any day when utility personnel will not be available to reconnect utility service during the immediately succeeding day(s) and the National Weather Service local forecast between 6 A.M. and 9 A.M. predicts that the temperature during the Period of Unavailability will drop below 32 degrees Fahrenheit.

## Hot Weather

The City will adhere to the following conditions regarding Discontinuance of Utility Service for residential customers during hot-weather periods:

Discontinuance of electric utility service to all residential customers, including all residential tenants of apartment buildings, for nonpayment of bills is prohibited:

On any day when the National Weather Service local forecast between 6 A.M. and 9 A.M, the high for the following 24 hours to rise above 95 degrees Fahrenheit or that the heat index will be greater than 105 degrees Fahrenheit.

On any day when utility personnel will not be available to reconnect Utility Service during the immediately succeeding day(s) and the National Weather Service local forecast between 6 A.M. and 9 A.M. the high for the following 24 hours to rise above 95 degrees Fahrenheit or that the heat index will be greater than 105 degrees Fahrenheit.

### Exceptions

Exceptions to the Weather Rule may occur when payment arrangements are not kept, checks are written on insufficient funds and the customers have been notified of those returned checks, a credit/debit card charge-back is received from a bank and the customer has been notified of the charge-back, for reasons of safety, and for customer diversion or tampering with utility service.

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## What is a fuel cost adjustment?

We frequently receive questions about higher than usual bills after periods of extreme heat or very cold weather. It is important to note that the residential electrical rates have not increased since 2012. This means our residential users have paid the same rate per kilowatt hour for more than a decade.

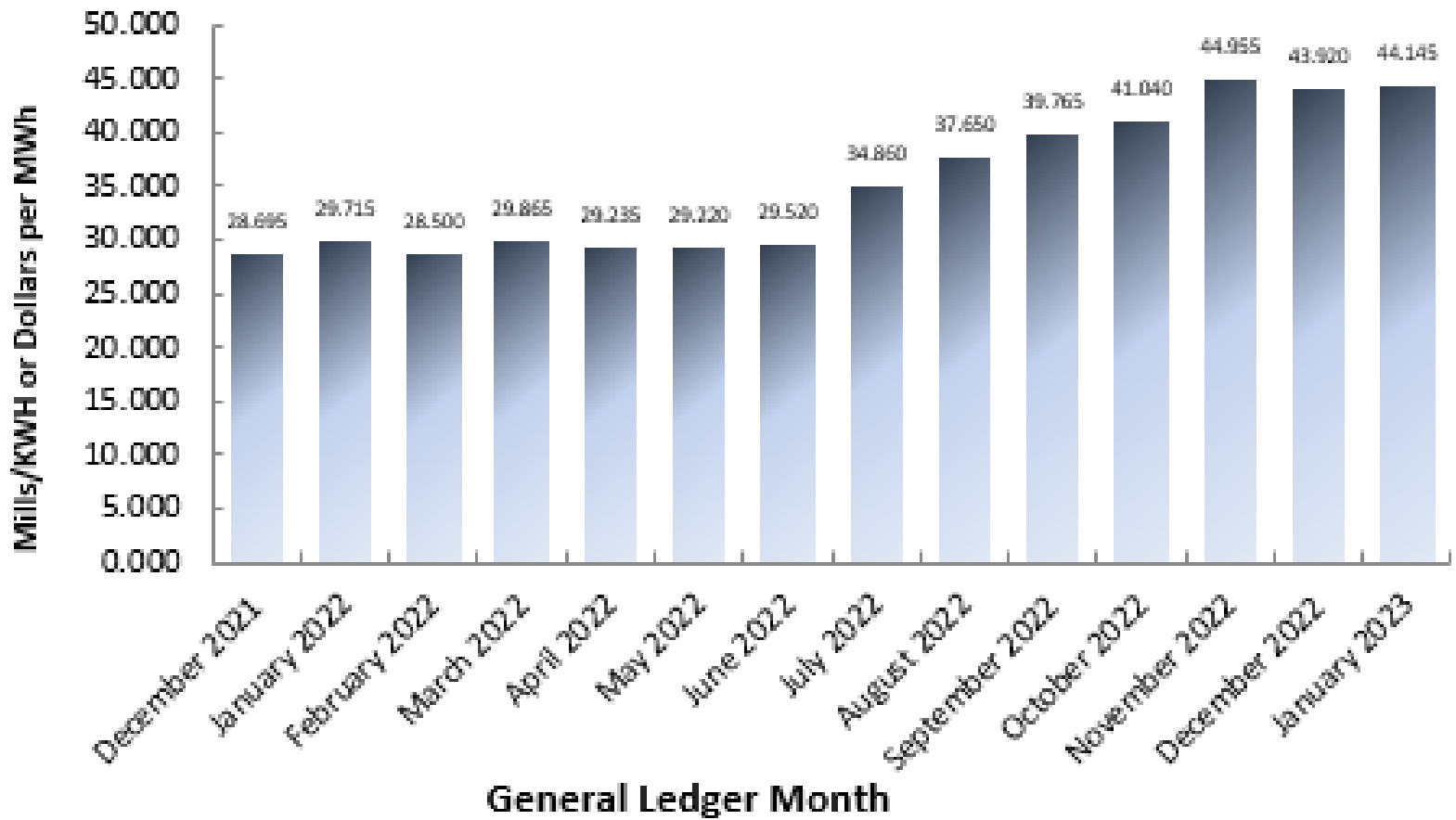
However, the fuel cost adjustment (FCA) on your bills has increased as the cost of fuel has increased. Just like when you go to fill-up your car's gas tank, it costs us more to purchase fuel to run generators. Please see chart below for costs we've seen since Dec. 2021.

Finally, your bill will also go up when you use more electricity. During periods of extreme heat or cold, your HVAC system is required to do more to keep up with the demand. This means you are using more electricity to keep your home cool or warm.

There is a level-pay option for our customers that wish to average out their payments over the year. This means you will pay an average based on usage in your household each month. For details on this program and to see if you can apply, please contact Utilities Customer Service at 816-325-7930.



## INDEP. POWER & LIGHT DEPT. FUEL COST ADJUSTMENT HISTORY



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