

Pinellas County Utilities Rate Changes Approved

Changes to Pinellas County Utilities wholesale and retail sewer and water rates, and retail reclaimed water rates were approved on September 29, 2009 by the Board of County Commissioners. The new rates are effective Oct. 1, 2009.

Increasing rates to our customers is never an easy decision: yet, it is a decision that is required to provide a long term, safe, reliable and environmentally sound water supply. Good stewardship of our water resources is a high priority. We are committed to providing you with a safe and reliable water supply.

The rate increases needed in the various systems at this time are due to several factors:

Water System

- increased cost of purchasing water (rate increase by Tampa Bay Water)
- need to maintain adequate financial reserves
- ongoing costs for renewal and replacement of the systems, and increased operating and maintenance costs such as electricity and chemicals
- reduced revenue as a result of the economic downturn, housing vacancies, and lower water use

Sewer System

- debt service requirements of outstanding sewer bonds
- ongoing costs for renewal and replacement of the systems, and increased operating and maintenance costs such as electricity and chemicals
- reduced revenue as a result of economic downturn, and housing vacancies

Reclaimed Water System

- system currently operating at a deficit
- ongoing costs for renewal and replacement of the systems, and increased operating and maintenance costs such as electricity and chemicals

Impact of Rate Changes

The following rate tables represent the current rate and the new rate.

Retail Water

	FY 08/09 Approved	FY 09/10 New rate
% Increase	3%	8%
Volumetric Rate (per 1,000 gallons)	\$4.28	\$4.62
Base Charge (monthly)	\$3.00	\$3.24

Retail Sewer

	FY 08/09 Approved	FY 09/10 New rate
% Increase*	0%	3.5%
Volumetric Rate (per 1,000 gallons)	\$3.65	\$3.78
Base Charge (monthly)	\$10.00	\$10.35

**Retail sewer rates were last increased six years ago and wholesale rates have not increased for five years.*

Retail Reclaimed Water (unfunded)

Retail (unmetered service)	FY 08/09 Approved	FY 09/10 New rate
% Increase	0%	11%
Availability fee (monthly)	\$7.00	\$7.00
Usage fee (monthly)	\$2.00	\$3.00
Volumetric Rate* (per 1,000 gallons)	\$0.29	\$0.32

**Volumetric rate only applies to retail metered service*

Retail Reclaimed Water (funded)

Retail (unmetered service)	FY 08/09 Approved	FY 09/10 New rate
% Increase	0%	11%
Usage fee (monthly)	\$8.00	\$8.89
Volumetric Rate* (per 1,000 gallons)	\$0.29	\$0.32

**Volumetric rate only applies to retail metered service*

An eight percent increase in the **wholesale water rate** will potentially impact customers of Pinellas Park, Clearwater, Safety Harbor, Oldsmar and Tarpon Springs.

A 3.5% increase in the **wholesale sewer rate** will potentially impact customers of Pinellas Park, Indian Rocks Beach, Redington Shores, and North Redington Beach.

Frequently Asked Questions

How will the rate changes affect my bill?

Retail water rates

The eight percent increase will mean an additional \$2.29 per month for a Pinellas County Utilities customer using 6,000 gallons of water per month. Pinellas County Utilities distributes water on a retail basis to the unincorporated areas of the county, within the City of Largo, City of Seminole, City of Kenneth City, and the incorporated areas of the beach communities.

Retail sewer rates

The 3.5% increase, the first in six years for retail customers, will mean an additional \$1.13 per month for a Pinellas County Utilities customer using 6,000 gallons of water per month.

Retail reclaimed water rates

The 11 percent increase will mean an additional \$1.00 per month for a typical PCU customer who is connected to the reclaimed system and paying the usage fee for the service.

Why are rate changes being implemented at this time?

The rate increases are needed at this time due to:

- increased cost of purchasing water from the regional water supplier
- debt service requirements of outstanding sewer bonds
- ongoing costs for renewal, maintenance and replacement of the systems
- reduced revenues in the water and sewer funds
- economic downturn, housing vacancies, and lower water use

When do the new rates go into effect?

The new rates are effective October 1, 2009.

What can I do to reduce my water bill?

Pinellas County Utilities offers various water saving devices to its customers including low flow showerheads, kitchen and bathroom faucet aerators, hose shut-off nozzles, and leak detection tablets. Customers may obtain these items by visiting our office at 14 South Fort Harrison Avenue in Clearwater during regular business hours, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday – Friday.

How can I learn more about indoor and outdoor water conservation?

Conservation information is available at our office, may be viewed online, or may be requested by telephone (727) 464-4000. Conservation initiatives include:

-Leak Detector Guide

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/utilities/publications.htm#leakdetector>

-Indoor Water Conservation Guide

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/utilities/publications.htm#indoorwater>

-Outdoor Water Conservation Guide

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/utilities/publications.htm#outdoorwater>

-Your Lawn May Have a Drinking Problem

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/utilities/publications.htm#healthylawn>

-Calibrating Your Sprinkler System

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/utilities/publications.htm#sprinkler>

-Solving the Mystery of the Leaky Flapper

<http://www.toiletflapper.org/page2.aspx>

-Does Your Castle Need a New Throne? (ultra low flow toilet rebate program)

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/utilities/ulft.html>

-Alternate Water Rebate Program

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/utilities/rebate-aws.htm>

-Reclaimed water use

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/utilities/publications.htm#reclaimed>

-Planet Pinellas (conservation newsletter)

<http://www.pinellascounty.org/utilities/publications.htm#planetpinellas>

At 88 gallons per person per day, Pinellas County Utilities has one of the lowest water use rates in the country.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please e-mail us at: custsrv@pinellascounty.org or call (727) 464-4000.