

## Change to Bi-Monthly Water Meter Reading – FAQ's

**Q1. Why has my water bill been estimated this month?**

**Response:** With the deployment of electric AMI meters, MPU requested and received approval to transition water meter readings (1" and smaller) to every other month. This was done as a way to keep costs low for all water customers, as it will reduce water meter reading expenses. Several utilities across the state read water meters on schedules other than monthly as allowed by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin.

**Q2. Is the sewer portion of the bill also estimated?**

**Response:** Yes, in months when the water bill is also estimated. This is because sewer charges are based on the water volumes billed.

**Q3. What if I don't use the estimated consumption I have been charged?**

**Response:** MPU will automatically true-up your actual usage on the next bill when the meter is read. Our Water meters continually track consumption. When the meter is read, the billing system looks at the last reading to calculate volumes used. If the estimate was too high, you will see a reduced bill or credit, depending on the actual volumes used compared to what has been billed. If the estimate is too low, you will see a higher bill. In either instance, your account will be true-up every other month.

**Q4. How did you calculate this estimated consumption?**

**Response:** MPU's billing system calculates estimates as follows:

1. If the customer has been at the location for at least one year, the estimate equals the actual usage one year ago for that particular month;
2. If the customer has been at the location for at least six months, the estimate is based on the average of their last six months of usage;
3. If the customer has not been at the location for at least six months, or if it is a new customer, the estimate will equal 1 unit of water or 748 gallons.

**Q5. Why don't you just bill me every other month instead of estimating in between readings?**

**Response:** MPU took a hard look at this and felt it would be beneficial to many of our customers to not see large sways in their monthly utility bill. MPU bills for electric, water and sewer in one monthly statement. Sewer charges are based on water consumption. If MPU were to just bill every other month, customers would see larger than normal bills in the month when water meters are read, which may be troublesome for those on budgets or fixed incomes to plan for.

**Q6. Why don't you deploy AMI for water?**

**Response:** MPU has investigated the costs of full deployment of AMI water meters, but, at this time, a full deployment cannot be cost justified. A feasibility study is planned to be conducted

in the future to determine if a full deployment of water AMI meters can be justified. We are currently piloting 20 AMI water meters to document benefits and identify any issues.

**Q7. I don't agree with this estimate.**

**Response:** Step 1: MPU will review your historical consumption with you and the new method of reading water meters. MPU will also offer to walk you through reading your own meter in order to help you compare actual usage to the estimate.  
Step 2: If these efforts still do not provide you assurance, MPU will conduct an on-site read at no cost to you.

**Q8. How do I know how much water I am using?**

**Response:** The top portion of your bill displays the register readings and usage for your water meter. MPU water meters measure in cubic foot increments. Billing units are in 100 cubic foot increments (CCF). 1 CCF equals 748 gallons. The bill displays the current month usage as well as usage from one year ago. If you have misplaced your bill, you can login to our Customer Portal and view your historical bills there.

**Q9. If I move out of my current residence or move to a new location, will the reading be estimated?**

**Response:** Requests to start or stop services will always require an actual meter reading. This ensures that previous and new customers at the location pay only for what they actually use.

**Q10. Will I still get Sprinkling Forgiveness Sewer Credits?**

**Response:** Yes. The Sprinkling Forgiveness Program has been established so residential water users won't be charged for sewer usage on water used for lawn and garden sprinkling, car washing, and wading pools, since it does not enter the City's Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Program is in effect from April through October. During these months, the sewer flow portion of your bill is calculated based on the average sewer charges during the previous five winter months. Calculation of the winter sewer average will be made following actual meter readings.

**Q11. Can I call in meter readings or send a post card reading?**

**Response:** If you had a high water use event in your household like a toilet leak, broken pipe, watered a new lawn, or you filled a large swimming pool, by all means contact us with a water meter reading or request an actual meter reading.

**Q12. Are all water meters in the city being estimated?**

**Response:** No. Large water users such as industries, schools, institutions, and some retail will continue to be read monthly due to high volumes of water consumed, and special metering circumstances for measurement of sewer flows and for outside reporting purposes.