

BLOOMSBURG MUNICIPAL AUTHORITY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING SEWER BILLS IN THE TOWN OF BLOOMSBURG

HOW AM I BILLED FOR SEWER?

All properties in the Town of Bloomsburg receive water service from a private company, Suez Water PA unless your property contains an on-lot well. Sewer bills in the Town of Bloomsburg are based on monthly water consumption figures. Properties with on-lot wells are read by Bloomsburg Municipal Authority staff monthly. Your sewer bill for the current month is based on the water consumption from the prior month. Suez Water PA provides the Municipal Authority billing office with this consumption information at the end of each month. For example, your January bill will be based on your water consumption from the billing period that ended the prior month. If your water meter is normally read on the 15th of each month, your January bill would be based on a water consumption period of 11/14-12/15 approximately. Sewer charges are based on a consumption schedule approved by the Bloomsburg Municipal Authority board. This schedule can be found on the Municipal Authority's page on the Town of Bloomsburg website.

WHEN ARE SEWER BILLS MAILED AND WHEN ARE THEY DUE?

Sewer bills are mailed monthly on or around the 7th of each month. Sewer bills are not produced by the local office of the Municipal Authority but are processed offsite by a company that specializes in utility billing. The due date for all sewer bills is the end of each month. For example, the bill that is mailed on or around January 7th would be due by January 31st.

HOW CAN I PAY MY MONTHLY SEWER BILL?

Bills can be paid several ways. The Municipal Authority utilizes a lock box maintained locally by First Columbia bank which processes all payments mailed via our Post Office Box. Cash or check payments are also accepted locally at the East Street branch of First Columbia Bank. The Authority utilizes an online bill payment system through Xpress Bill Pay which allows for debit, credit and ACH payments. Residents can also set monthly sewer bills up on "auto pay" through Xpress Bill Pay. Contact the Municipal Authority office at 570-784-5422 for more information on how to create an account on Xpress Bill Pay. The Municipal Authority business office located at 1000 Market Street, Suite 9 (Market Street Shopping Plaza) also accepts checks and electronic forms of payment (Debit/Credit cards) during regular business hours. The Authority business office cannot accept cash payments.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T PAY MY SEWER BILL BY THE DUE DATE?

Bills which are not paid prior to the due date are considered "past due". For bills not received by the due date, a 10% penalty is assessed. Bills that remain unpaid for a subsequent billing cycle(s) are assessed interest. Once a bill becomes 90 days past due, and the amount due exceeds \$150.00, the bill is considered "delinquent". Prior to the end of the 90-day period, a notice will appear on your bill warning you that you have a balance soon eligible to be sent to collections. Delinquent account balances are moved to a separate account which is created for past due balances.

WHAT HAPPENS ONCE MY SEWER BILL IS MOVED TO A COLLECTIONS ACCOUNT?

Once a bill has exceeded the parameters set of 90 days past due and over \$150.00, a 25% collection fee is assessed on the total balance. This collection fee is assessed to offset the additional costs incurred by the Authority to begin collection action on this unpaid balance. When a bill is moved into a collection account, you will see a notice near the bottom of your bill indicating that an additional balance is in collections. Those residents with a collection balance will have two separate accounts with the Authority—their regular monthly sewer account and a collection account. The collection account number is the same number as the regular account but contains a "99" on the end. For example, if your account number is 123456, the subsequent collection account would be 12345699. Collection accounts are maintained by the local Municipal Authority office. The Municipal Authority no longer uses a collection agency for delinquent sewer account balances. You will be notified of your delinquent balance by our local office and payment arrangements for these balances can be established by contacting our office at 570-784-5422, X2. Non-payment of your sewer utility account is a serious matter and the Municipal Authority is authorized to take several steps in order to ensure payment of these balances, including termination of your water service. Prior to termination of your water service, you may also be cited by the District Magistrate's office for the non-payment of your sewer bill and the Authority can lien the property for the unpaid balance. When this happens, the property owner is responsible for payment of all filing costs and fees.

HOW CAN I AVOID COLLECTION ACTION ON MY SEWER BILL?

Obviously, the easiest way to avoid collection action is to pay your sewer bill by the due date each month. If you have a question on the amount billed, etc. please contact the billing office or the Authority business office prior to the due date. Keep in mind, once the due date for your sewer bill passes, the balance is immediately assessed a 10% penalty. When that balance remains unpaid through subsequent billing cycles, the account is assessed interest. When the bill meets the Municipal Authority's collection parameters, it is assessed an additional 25% collection fee. Property owners whose accounts are pursued through the Magistrate are responsible for the additional filing charges. If the Authority receives judgment at the Magistrate's office, the account again begins being assessed monthly interest. Failure to pay a minimum sewer bill by the end of the month can result in additional charges far exceeding the initial bill. For this reason, it is important that property owners keep their sewer account balances current, avoiding additional fees assessed after the due date.

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS:

For questions on the water consumption figure listed on your bill:

- Contact Suez Water PA at **1-888-299-8972**

For questions on your sewer bill:

- Contact Customer Service at **570-317-2600**

For questions on your collections account or to establish payment arrangement:

- Contact the Municipal Authority office at **570-784-5422, X2**

The local office of the Bloomsburg Municipal Authority is located at 1000 Market Street, Suite 9, Bloomsburg PA