

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Effective October 1, 2014 - Sewer Use Fees

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### **My sewer bill is higher, why?**

Effective October 1 there was an 8% increase in the monthly sewer use fees in accordance with the rate schedule set forth in ordinance. For a single family residence this was an increase of \$2.97/month. On your quarterly bill, that represents an increase of \$8.91.

### **Why is the City raising the sewer use fee?**

Fees are increased to keep up with the costs of operating, repairing, and replacing our wastewater collection and treatment plant infrastructure, as well as to manage and maintain our compliance with a number of state and federal regulatory programs. Much of the existing infrastructure has been inspected, evaluated and prioritized for repair or replacement. This increase will enable the City to “pay as you go” for the rehabilitation and replacement projects scheduled.

### **When did the City raise the sewer use fee?**

There has been a 4% annual increase in place since 2005. On August 24, 2011, Council approved an additional 4% annual increase for a total annual increase of 8%. The 8% annual increase will be effective until 2015, at which time the annual increases will be based upon the Consumer Price Index (CPI). City staff presented the proposed increase to the Financial Advisory Board and the Sewer Rate Advisory Board, both comprised of Reno citizens, as well as to all Neighborhood Advisory Boards. The rate increase with options was presented to the Reno City Council, who approved it based on staff recommendations and reviews by both the Financial Advisory Board and the Sewer Rate Advisory Board.

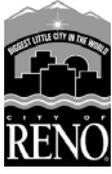
### **What do the monthly sewer use fees pay for?**

The monthly sewer fees go into the Reno Sewer Enterprise Fund which is principally used for:

- Operating, maintaining, and repairing our two wastewater treatment plants (Truckee Meadows Water Reclamation Facility and Reno-Stead Water Reclamation Facility) to protect public health, our water ways and to comply with state and federal regulations;
- Planning, designing, and constructing projects to rehabilitate our wastewater treatment and collection systems;
- Inspecting, cleaning, and repairing our sewers, storm drains, and ditches to minimize backups and overflows;

A fraction of the funds are also used for:

- Managing our Environmental Control program which permits and inspects commercial and industrial discharges to our sewers (permit fees are collected so most of the activities for this program are self sufficient);
- Delivering reclaimed water to reuse sites such as golf courses and parks which help preserve our potable water supplies and river resources;
- Coordinating the Regional Storm Water Management Program with other public agencies to comply with state and federal regulations;



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- Planning and facilitating watershed improvement projects such as river restoration, bank stabilization, and drainage projects.

### **Doesn't new development pay for those things?**

New development projects pay sewer connection fees that are designated to pay for such things as expansion of facilities, like wastewater treatment plants or new sewer collection lines. So as new customers come on to the system, collection and treatment facilities can accommodate the additional flow. For example, currently for each new home constructed, a fee of \$6,376 is collected at the time of building permit issuance.

### **I think my fee was calculated wrong –**

Customer billing can be double checked. Provide the customer account number, service address and contact information to the Finance-Sewer Division via e-mail at [renosewer@reno.gov](mailto:renosewer@reno.gov) or through Reno Direct. Reno Direct will provide that information to the Finance-Sewer Division. The customer will receive a call back within 3 business days after the request is received by the Finance-Sewer Division.

### **I've heard about a Sewer Rebate Program, how can I get in on that?**

The Sewer Rebate Program is intended to provide financial assistance to our customers with fixed incomes who meet certain eligibility criteria. The program, if approved through the Council adoption of the Budget in May, will open July 1. Applications are accepted through August 31<sup>st</sup>. The program's rebate amount is not intended to offset the annual increase. The rebate given is a set amount. The amount for the 2014 program was \$140. Please note that the program for the current year has closed.

### **My bill shows an amount billed for administration charge, Sewer "OM&R", Sewer Capital – What does that mean?**

**Administration Charge:** \$2.40 (residential) and \$4.20 (commercial) - Covers the cost of processing and sending out the bills.

**Operation, Maintenance & Replacement (OM&R):** Provides for the administration, operation, maintenance and minor replacement of the sewage plants, pumping stations and collection system.

**Capitalization:** Provides for debt service, depreciation, major replacement for the sewer collection system and treatment plants and other costs required to maintain the ability to continue providing services.