



Texarkana Water Frequently Asked Questions

Understanding Rates

1. What makes up my water bill?

For Texarkana, a typical water bill includes several separate charges:

- Water: The cost of the water you actually use, measured by your meter
- Water Infrastructure Fee: Supports maintenance and upgrades to water lines, pumps, and distribution infrastructure
- Sewer: Covers collection and treatment of wastewater
- Sewer Infrastructure Fee: Funds repair and replacement of aging sewer infrastructure
- Garbage: Residential solid waste collection services
- Riverbend Regional Water Treatment Plant Fee: Supports operation, maintenance, and financing of the regional plant
- Taxes: Applicable state or local taxes

Each component supports a different part of the utility system

Current Billing Details								
Current Billing Period: 11/12/2025 - 12/12/2025							Water	13.37
Service & Register ID	Meter Number	Previous Reading	Current Reading	Number of Days	Register Multiplier	Usage Gallons	Water Infrastructure Fee	1.50
					X =		Sewer	13.50
		107,594	107,680	30	10	860	Sewer Infrastructure Fee	1.50
							Garbage	31.63
							Water - Regional Water Treatment Plant Fee	4.44
							Taxes	2.61
							New Monthly Charges	\$68.55

2. Why is my bill higher / why am I paying more?

A higher utility bill does not always mean rates alone have increased. Several factors affect your total bill:

- Usage-based billing: Bills are based on how much water you use. Outdoor watering, seasonal demand, additional occupants, or increased usage will raise costs
- Seasonal patterns: Hot summers typically increase water consumption
- Billing cycle differences: Longer billing periods or adjustments from estimated to actual readings can make a bill appear higher
- Infrastructure investments: Some increases reflect necessary upgrades to ensure long-term system reliability

3. Why are rates increasing?

Rates are increasing for several key reasons:

- Construction and debt service: Principal and interest payments begin as the Riverbend Regional Water System Improvements Program project is built
- Reserve funding: Early rate increases help build the Regional Facilities Fund to maintain financial stability
- Cost sharing: Rates are equalized across all participating member cities to avoid sudden, larger increases later
- In Texarkana our water rates have increased 3-5% annually since 2022 and are scheduled to increase until 2032 based on the Water Rate Study explained in more detail in the next question.

4. What is the Water Rate Study?

In 2022 the City Council approved a ten-year rate plan to help with the repair/replacement of our aging infrastructure. This plan increases the water and sewer rates every October, beginning October 2022 and ending October 2031. The average increase is 3% to 5% without the Riverbend Plant fee for a typical residential meter using 6,000 gallons. With the existing water meters, the residential customers for Texarkana, Texas averaged 6,000 gallons per month usage.

Based on this usage, the typical water bill without irrigation, including the Riverbend Regional Water Treatment Plant Fee, increased approximately 10% from October 2024 to October 2025. However, customers will see an increase in usage due to the increased accuracy of the new water meters. With the customer portal the customers will be able to monitor and better manage their usage.

A copy of the study can be found on TWU's website at twu.txkusa.org:

Online Services → Document Center → Administration → Water and Sewer Rate Study Presentation



September 12, 2022

CITY OF TEXARKANA, TEXAS WATER AND SEWER RATE STUDY

NewGen
Strategies & Solutions

5. What should customers know about irrigation water rates?

In Texarkana similar to other cities, water charges are calculated using an **escalating rate** scale. This means water usage is billed in tiers, with the rate per thousand gallons increasing as total consumption rises. For Texarkana, Texas residents the rate starts at X and then increases to usage tiers.

Rates start at:

- \$2.75 per 1,000 gals for 0-2,000 gallons,
- \$3.38 per 1,000 gallons for 2,001-5,000,
- \$4.48 per 1,000 gallons for 5,001-7,000,
- \$5.51 per 1,000 gallons for 7,001-10,000, and
- \$6.69 per 1,000 gallons for usage over 10,000 gallons.

Irrigation systems typically use large volumes of water over relatively short periods, which can cause usage to quickly move into higher billing tiers. Once this occurs, each additional thousand gallons is billed at a higher rate than the previous tier. Because irrigation watering often involves multiple zones and longer run times, customers may reach higher tiers even when systems are operating as intended.

Hot and dry weather can further increase usage, which can significantly impact overall charges. The escalating rate structure is designed to encourage efficient water use and help manage system demand, particularly during peak usage periods. With the new customer portal, it is important for residents to sign up to monitor and better manage their usage.

6. How does Texarkana Water & Sewer bills compare to state averages?

According to the Texas Municipal League (TML) 2025 Water & Wastewater Survey, the average residential cost in Texas for a typical household using 5,000 gallons per month is roughly:

- Water: \$55.09
- Wastewater: \$40.55
- Combined total (water + wastewater): ~ **\$95.64 per month for 5,000 gallons** of residential use.

*Survey does not include irrigation or other charges.

Texarkana, Texas Comparison

- Water: \$ 28.14
- Wastewater: \$30.30
- Combined total (water + wastewater): ~ **\$58.44 per month for 5,000 gallons** of residential use.
- Including the Riverbend fee of \$25.80 for 5,000 gallons of residential use **total bills are \$84.24**

*Source: <http://www.tml.org/229/Water-Wastewater-Survey-Results>

Understanding New Meters

7. What is an Automatic Metering Infrastructure (AMI) System?

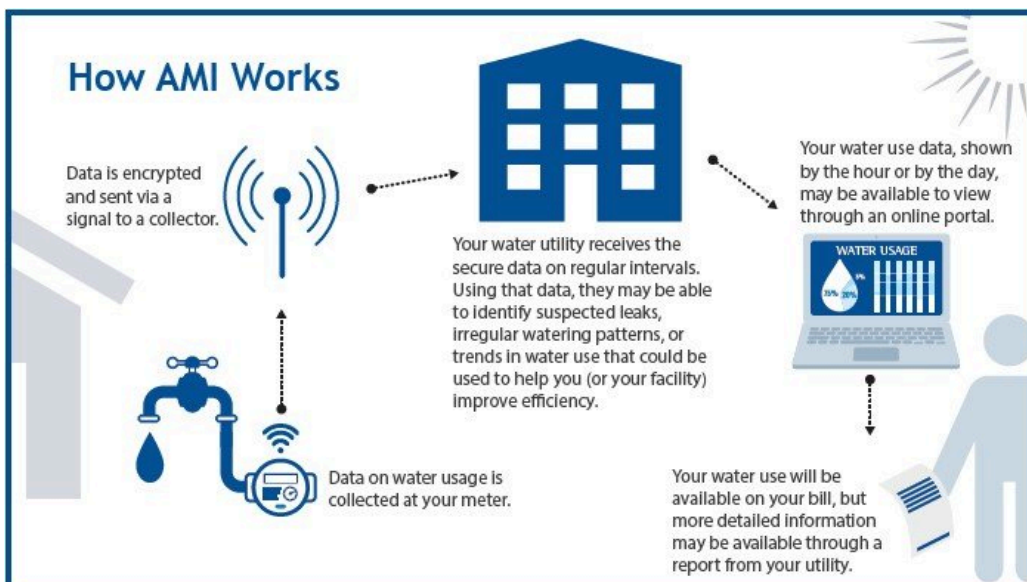
Description: The Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system communicates using machine-to-machine cellular technology. A cellular modem is connected to each smart water meter, allowing it to wirelessly send usage data, alerts, and alarms like a mobile phone directly to the secure Itron network data center over the existing Verizon cellular network. The ultrasonic water meters measure consumption electronically, transmit data in small, brief bursts three times a day for near real-time monitoring, leak detection, and accurate billing--eliminating manual reads.

As the **customer engagement portal is rolled out in phases**, customers will be able to receive notifications about potential leaks at their property and monitor their water usage in near real time.

8. What is the AMI System Project's Scope?

Project Scope: Replace or upgrade the aging water meters, reduce water loss through prompt detection of leaks, recover lost revenue, improve efficiency, and improve customer service by installing an Itron Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system and Itron Leak Detection system using new Diehl ultrasonic water meters with Itron acoustic leak sensors to continuously monitor the distribution system for possible leaks. The new ultrasonic water meters will increase the accuracy of measuring water usage which will reduce energy costs, chemical costs and prolong infrastructure life.

The new AMI system delivers near real-time data to a customer engagement portal, allowing residents to see near real-time consumption analysis, history and trends and allow the customer to set alerts and notifications for possible leaks/high usage.



*Source: <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/advanced-metering-infrastructure>

9. How accurate are water meters and can a meter cause a high bill?

TWU is replacing older, less accurate mechanical water meters with new ultrasonic water meters that either meet or exceed the water industry standard for accuracy. These ultrasonic water meters are 100% +/- 5% accurate at flow rates ranging from 0.025 gpm to 0.08 gpm, and they are 100% +/- 1.5% accurate at flow rates ranging from 0.08 gpm to 22 gpm.

With the new ultrasonic water meters and the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system that is being installed, TWU customers can have complete confidence that they have the most accurate water meter on the market today and that they are being billed correctly for the water that they are using. These highly accurate ultrasonic water meters will enable TWU to notify you promptly whenever there appears to be a leak at your residence--typically within 48 hours.

The new ultrasonic water meters will record water usage that was previously under-measured, especially small or continuous flows. In most cases, higher bills are caused by increased water use rather than an inaccurate water meter. Common causes of higher water bills include irrigation, leaks, seasonal demand, or changes in household usage. If you have an irrigation system, TWU encourages you to both check the timer settings and to check for leaks in the pipes and sprinkler heads. TWU also encourages you to periodically check the toilets, faucets, and showers for leaking valves.

10. When and how can a water meter be tested?

Customers may request a water meter accuracy test if they believe their usage does not reflect actual water consumption after first checking for leaks and reviewing usage habits. TWU tests water meters using established procedures found in the American Water Works Association Manual M6 Water Meters—Selection, Installation, Testing, and Maintenance to confirm they are operating within acceptable accuracy ranges. TWU Customer Service can help determine whether a meter test is appropriate and explain the testing process. Meter testing costs are 50.00 dollars for meters up to 1.5 inch. Larger meters depend upon size and ability to access. Cost is generally about 175.00.

11. What happens if a meter is found to be inaccurate, and how can customers monitor usage?

If a water meter is tested and found to be outside of the acceptable accuracy standards stated in the AWWA C715-18 (R22) Standard, TWU will take appropriate corrective action, which may include replacing the water meter and reviewing billing as allowed under city policy. With the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system, TWU customers can monitor near real-time water usage through a customer portal, receive leak alerts, and better manage consumption. For assistance, customers are encouraged to contact TWU Customer Service for an individual account review.

12. How much water can a leaking toilet waste, and why does it matter?

A leaking toilet can waste a surprising amount of water, often without being obvious. A common residential toilet can use upwards of 3 gallons a minute. At this rate a single toilet can use well over 100,000 gallons a month.

If a customer sees an unexpected increase, one of the first things to check is the toilet. A worn flapper is a common culprit, although the flush lever and the chain that connects the flush lever to the flapper can also fail. A simple dye tablet test (tablets provided free of charge by TWU) or listening for intermittent "refill" sounds can help confirm a leak, and repairs are often inexpensive. Irrigation system leaks can often be found by looking for standing water in dry conditions or sections of grass that are greener than the surrounding area.

13. How can a customer lower their TWU bill?

- If you have an irrigation system you can call or email the Utility to have your meter turned off during the winter months. There is a \$15 turn off and turn on fee. By turning the meter off you will not be billed the minimum monthly bill until the meter is turned back on.
- In the new customer portal the residents will have access to near real-time consumption analysis, see their usage history, and set their own alerts and notifications for possible leaks/high usage. The customer portal allows the customer to better manage their water usage while verifying their bill with TWU Customer Service.
- Two common causes for higher than normal bills are possible internal plumbing problems or a malfunctioning irrigation system. In case of a water leak resulting in a higher than normal bill, the Utility, at the customer request, will work with the customer to set up a payment plan.

Questions about your bill? Contact TWU Customer Service at customerservice@txkusa.org or call Monday-Friday 8am-5pm (903) 798 3800

14. What is the Riverbend project?

This is a \$497.9 million regional water infrastructure program led by the **Riverbend Water Resources District (RWRD)** to build a new, state-of-the-art water treatment facility, an intake system from Lake Wright Patman, and modern transmission pipelines serving Texarkana and nearby communities. Over the past decade, several studies were conducted to examine the current state of our infrastructure and identify possible future infrastructure needs. During that time, Riverbend completed a master plan for the area's water infrastructure and development.

These documents led to the planning of the **Regional Water System Improvements Program** which included each Riverbend participating member city voting in 2020 to enter into new water supply agreements for the purpose of funding the program over the next 30 years. Over half a century ago, Annona, Avery, DeKalb, Hooks, Maud, New Boston, Wake Village, and Texarkana TX & AR, all agreed to a similar strategy, contracting for proportional debt payments on the purchase of water facilities being used today to treat drinking water. For example, in 2026 Texarkana's rate to cover debt service payments is \$5.16 per 1,000 gallons for the Riverbend Regional Water Treatment Plant Fee.

The goals of the Regional Water System Improvements Program include:

1. Meet the projected increase in water demand due to population growth for the next 50 years. Planning, designing, obtaining necessary permits and building infrastructure of this magnitude takes time and money.
2. Provide water supply and security for the region by addressing aging infrastructure issues.
3. Improve the quality of water supplied to the customers by addressing water quality and odor issues through treatment process.

The project replaces the aging New Boston Road Water Treatment Plant and is designed to ensure safe, reliable drinking water for the next 50 years

15. Why is it called a “generational” investment?

This project is considered generational because it is not a short-term fix or partial upgrade. It is an entirely new regional water system designed to serve multiple generations. The new facility will meet Texarkana's water needs well into the late 21st century, supporting population growth, economic development, and future industrial users.

16. How much will it cost?

The total project cost is \$497.9 million, financed through the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB). Debt service for the project extends through 2059, allowing costs to be spread over time.

17. What makes the new plant “modernized”?

One of the most significant upgrades is the use of advanced ozone treatment technology. Ozone treatment is a next-generation water purification process that uses ozone gas to oxidize and remove taste and odor-causing compounds.

This technology is among the cleanest and most effective available and helps:

1. Eliminate earthy or musty odors common in lake-based water supplies
2. Reduce organic materials before filtration
3. Improve water clarity and taste without adding chemical by-products

Once operational, Texarkana residents can expect cleaner, fresher tasting, odor-free drinking water.

18. Why can't we just upgrade the old water plant?

Simply upgrading the old plant is not a viable long-term solution for several reasons:

1. Age and condition: Older facilities were not designed to meet modern water quality standards
2. Capacity limitations: The old plant cannot efficiently meet current or future demand
3. Cost efficiency: Major upgrades to aging infrastructure can cost nearly as much as building a new facility
4. Regulatory requirements: State and federal drinking water regulations continue to become more stringent
5. Reliability: A regional system provides redundancy and long-term operational stability

The new regional plant ensures safe, reliable water for decades, not just incremental improvements.

19. What if a city does not participate in financing?

Cities that do not participate in the regional bond financing will be required to purchase finished water at retail market rates, which are expected to be significantly higher than wholesale participant rates. Participation now helps lock in lower long-term costs and predictable rate structures.

20. What are the benefits for Texarkana residents?

Texarkana residents will benefit from:

- Cleaner, better-tasting water through ozone treatment.
- Greater system reliability and drought resilience
- Increased Economic Development capacity to support growth and new businesses
- Lower long-term costs through shared regional infrastructure
- Compliance with modern environmental and safety standards

21. How will my water rate change?

Based on the July 2025 Riverbend Water Resources District (RWRD) financing model, the wholesale RWRD water rate (per 1,000 gallons) will increase gradually over time as the project is constructed and placed into service. Each participating city’s rates (including Texarkana’s rate) will be higher than the debt rate shown below with the difference accounting for water loss in the system. For example, in FY2026 Texarkana’s rate to cover debt service payments is \$5.16 per 1,000 gallons for the Riverbend Regional Water Treatment Plant Fee.

Projects to address system water loss have been approved and implemented over the last several years to reduce the amount paid towards water loss. Additionally, Texarkana has developed a water loss strategy utilizing consultants with Holistic Utility Solutions that will be implanted over the next 3-5 years.

Fiscal Year	RWRD Rate (\$/1,000 gal)	Key Phase
2026	\$3.60	Initial financing begins
2027	\$4.80	Design & construction ramp up
2028-2030	\$6.00 → \$6.25	Peak construction and bond service
2031-2050	= \$6.25 → \$6.00	Stable long-term repayment
2051-2056	Declining to \$3.50	Debt nearing retirement
2057-2059	≤ \$1.80 → \$0	Final <u>bond</u> pay-off

22. When will this happen?

- 2026–2027: Design completion and land acquisition (approximately 180 acres at TexAmericas Center)
- 2028–2030: Full construction and initial operation
- 2031 and beyond: System fully online with rate stabilization and ozone treatment in service

STAY INFORMED:

Residents can stay informed by visiting: www.rwr.org/rrwsip and twu.txkusa.org and attending workshops and public information sessions hosted by Riverbend Water Resources District (RWRD) and Texarkana Water Utilities (TWU).