

# What Austin needs to know about wastewater averaging

## Wastewater Averaging

The City of Austin calculates wastewater costs based on the amount of water used during three consecutive winter billing periods. These three periods occur between mid-November and mid-March. Since water usage during these months is generally only inside household use, it's a good measure of the volume flowing through your wastewater system. You can lower your wastewater costs for the next year by conserving water use during these billing periods.

### What is a wastewater average?

The wastewater average is the basis for determining the amount you are billed for wastewater.

### How will I know the dates used for my wastewater average calculation?

- Check your utility bill for information about the specific dates of your wastewater average period.
- Visit [www.AustinWater.org](http://www.AustinWater.org) and click on the Wastewater Averaging icon. There you will find how to determine your home's wastewater average period.
- Call Utility Customer Service at 512-494-9400.

### Why does the City use a wastewater average as the basis for my wastewater bill?

Your water meter measures your monthly water use, but there is no meter on your wastewater line. Wastewater averaging provides a measure that represents the wastewater volume discharged.

### How can I manage my wastewater average so it best represents my actual wastewater volume?

Conserve water—here are a few tips.



Don't water the lawn during fall and winter months--turn off automatic irrigation systems.



Wash only full loads in the dishwasher and washing machine.



Take shorter showers place a timer in the bathroom.



Fix leaky toilets and faucets.



When buying new water-using appliances and fixtures, look for the WaterSense® label.

### Why can't everyone use the same months to calculate their wastewater average?

The date your meter is read determines the monthly billing periods used to calculate your wastewater average. Because of the large number of water meters in the city, only one district can be read each day. Each of the 20 districts has its distinct monthly billing cycle which is reflected by the read date on your bill.

### What if I have no water usage during the averaging period?

If two or three months of the averaging period have no water use billed, the wastewater average will be set at a default wastewater average, which is 5,000 gallons for residential customers. A customer must have at least 60 consecutive billing days of water usage for a calculated wastewater average.

**Austin Water treats your drinking water to the highest standards providing exceptional value and reliability.**

The Colorado River, in the form of the Highland Lakes, is the source of all of Austin’s drinking water. We treat the water and then pipe it to homes and businesses through more than 3,700 miles of underground water lines. Then, Austin Water collects the wastewater from almost 2,700 miles of sewer mains and treats it to a standard higher than what is required by the state, so much so that the segment of the Colorado River downstream of Austin’s wastewater discharge is rated exceptional under Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) standards approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

*In Austin, we put our heart and soul into our music, food, festivals and enjoying the outdoors. Austin Water shares this passion when it comes to your water, and for Austin Water, nothing is more important.*

For more than 100 years, Austin Water has been providing safe, reliable drinking water and treating wastewater to make it safe. From the Colorado River and back again, generations of employees have built a legacy of delivering high-quality water services.

**Austin Water delivers more than clean water to your tap every day.**

Whether it’s our biologists on the Wildlands, water plant technicians, pipeline repair crews, engineers or chemists in the lab, Austin Water has over 1,100 dedicated professionals who are proud to serve more than 900,000 citizens every day.

**Water Infrastructure**

Our water distribution system carries the lifeblood of our community and our wastewater system helps keep us safe from disease and protects the Colorado River. In order to dependably deliver service to our customers each and every day, Austin Water is responsible for operating and maintaining an incredible amount of infrastructure, including not only over 3,700 miles of water lines, and almost 2,700 miles of sewer mains, but also two existing water treatment plants, two major wastewater treatment plants, 124 lift stations, and 41 pump stations and boosters. Every month, Austin Water crews respond to an average of over 3,000 water and wastewater infrastructure repair requests. Austin Water also maintains more than 26,000 fire hydrants. In addition to this infrastructure providing reliable water services, it is also the backbone of public safety when it comes to fire fighting.



**What Is the Grease Blob?**

The Grease Blob is made up of – fats, oils and grease also known as FOG. FOG comes from foods like cooking oil, butter, sauces, gravy, dairy products and even salad dressing.

**The Grease Blob feeds on FOG**

When you put FOG down the drain, it sticks to the insides of the pipes, making the perfect environment for the Grease Blob.

**Feeding the Grease Blob can cause big problems, here’s how:**

- It can clog your plumbing and cause sewer back-ups in your home, resulting in an expensive visit from the plumber.
- It clogs the City’s sewer lines and it makes wastewater harder and more expensive to treat.
- The clogs can cause the sewer to back up and overflow into your neighborhood streets, parks, storm drains and waterways.

**How to Fight the Grease Blob:**

- Collect cooled cooking oil and grease into a can or plastic bottle and recycle it or throw it in the trash.
- Wipe oil and grease from cookware and dishes with a paper towel before washing.
- Throw food scraps into the compost bin or trash, avoid using the garbage disposal.



**Greasy Myths**

Many people believe that it is ok to put the sources of FOG down the drain if they run the garbage disposal, use plenty of hot water, or chase it with soap. Disposals grind up the greasy foods into smaller particles, which can make it even easier for it to cling to pipes.

**Never Pour Grease Down the Drain!**

**Visit [www.WaterWiseAustin.org](http://www.WaterWiseAustin.org)**