

NEWS FROM THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO WATER DEPARTMENT

Rate increase funds to pay for improvements in water systems

On April 30, 2002, the San Diego Mayor and City Council approved a series of 6 percent rate increases designed to upgrade, expand and maintain aging water storage, treatment and delivery systems.

The package called for a series of five increases. The first took place on July 1, 2002, with the fourth taking place July 1, 2005. The first bill you receive after July 1, 2005, is prorated incorporating both the old and new rates.

While each of these increases will raise overall revenue to the Water Department 6 percent, the percentage each customer's bill increases will vary depending upon the amount of water used (please see table at right). The reason for this is that half of the increased revenue is coming from the base fee and half is coming from the commodity (or water used) charges. Therefore the base fee cost of your water bill is now a larger proportion of the overall bill than it had been previously.

So, a customer using 8 hundred cubic feet (one HCF is equivalent to 748 gallons) in a billing period will see an increase of \$1.79 which is an increase of 7 percent. But, somebody who uses 25 HCF will see their bill go up \$3.29 although their total bill increases only 5.5 percent.

In San Diego, the average single-family customer uses about 14 HCF a month. Those customers will have about a 6 percent increase, roughly equal to the overall revenue increase.

New Single-Family Domestic Rates

IMPORTANT NOTE: THIS TABLE IS BASED ON ONE MONTH'S USAGE.

	<u>PREVIOUSLY</u>	<u>JULY 1, 2005</u>
Base Fee	\$13.08	\$14.31
First 7 HCF billed at:	\$ 1.541	\$ 1.609
8-14 HCF billed at:	\$ 1.938	\$ 2.023
15+ HCF billed at:	\$ 2.130	\$ 2.223

To determine your bill, simply add the base fee to the charge for water used. For examples of typical water bill increases, please see the table below. The average customer in San Diego uses about 14 HCF per month.

	<u>PREVIOUSLY</u>	<u>JULY 1, 2005</u>	<u>\$ INCREASE</u>	<u>% INCREASE</u>
Total bill at 4 HCF	\$19.24	\$20.75	\$1.51	7.8%
Total bill at 8 HCF	\$25.81	\$27.60	\$1.79	7.0%
Total bill at 14 HCF	\$38.78	\$41.13	\$2.35	6.1%
Total bill at 25 HCF	\$59.83	\$63.12	\$3.29	5.5%

In all other customer classes the commodity charge is increasing from \$1.791 per HCF to \$1.870 per HCF. For the new monthly base fees, which are determined by meter size, please check your bill or visit our web pages at: www.sandiego.gov/water.

A large portion of these increases is going towards finishing up Capital Improvement projects which are already underway. The Water Department's Capital Improvements Program was created to ensure San Diego has safe and reliable water systems. For the first time in more than a decade, part of the

increase is also going to the operations and maintenance sections.

For more information about the new water rates, please contact a Water Department Customer Service Representative at (619) 515-3500, or visit our website at: www.sandiego.gov/water.

Poster Contest winners are announced

The annual Water Conservation Poster Contest was the most popular ever with more than 3,300 San Diego students artistically demonstrating ways to save water.

The winners received their awards during a San Diego City Council meeting. This year's winners were:

First Grade: 1. Spencer Elizabeth McVeigh, Hearst Elementary; 2. Brady Anderson, Hearst Elementary; 3. Cassidy Scott, Hearst Elementary.

Second Grade: 1. Rachel Renouf, Silver Gate Elementary; 2. Kaitlyn Lund, Silver Gate Elementary; 3. Michael Cao, Hearst Elementary.

Third Grade: 1. Christine Sun, Deer Canyon Elementary; 2. Zachary Balmat, La Jolla Elementary; 3. Katherine Hom, Hawthorne Elementary.

Fourth Grade: 1. Kathleen Li, Torrey Pines Elementary; 2. Cassie Hwang, Shoal Creek Elementary; 3. Johanna Yen, Sunset Hills Elementary.

Fifth Grade: 1. Amy Ishiguro, La Jolla Elementary; 2. Alexandra Greenberg, Francis Parker School; 3. Charmaine Ong, Sandburg Elementary.

Sixth Grade: 1. Alexander Ambito-Ortiz, Mendoza Elementary; 2. Natalie Cotton, Good Shepherd Catholic School; 3. George Embry, Good Shepherd Catholic School.



Spencer Elizabeth McVeigh's poster was voted best in the first grade category.

New web pages educational and include a survey

As part of the Water Department's efforts to continually improve service to our customers, we've created some interactive and helpful web pages. These (and all the other Department pages) can be found at www.sandiego.gov/water.

The new pages include:

- **What You Need to Know When There's a Loss of H₂O: A Guide to Water Emergencies:** A brochure and video that provides information on the steps to responding to a water emergency, how to investigate smaller leaks, and important contact information.
- **Customer Satisfaction Survey:** A blue or yellow rectangle door hanger is now provided after a crew has performed a requested service. The purpose of this prepaid and postmarked door hanger is to obtain feedback from the customer on the quality of service they experienced. An electronic version is now also available on-line.
- **New Water Operations Web Pages:** These new pages give an overview of the Department's Water Operations Division. Included is info about water leaks, emergencies, service door hangers, and how the Department works to be environmentally friendly.

New conservation program could help lower HOA fees

One of the costs associated with buying or renting a home is a monthly fee to the Homeowner's Association (HOA) for the cost of maintaining common landscaped areas. Many San Diegans don't realize how water usage in these areas can impact their HOA fees. To help, the Water Department is encouraging residents and HOA board members to participate in the free Commercial Landscape Survey Program (CLSP).

The CLSP is for customers with one or more acres of landscaped property. The program includes an audit of the irrigation system, a written evaluation of the system's performance, aerial photos of the property, color photos of areas

to improve, practical advice and water-saving recommendations, a water-use budget for the year and an irrigation controller schedule for each month. Properties previously surveyed have reported water savings of more than 20 percent.

The CLSP is made possible through funding provided by the San Diego County Water Authority and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California.

To schedule a survey, or for more information, please call (619) 570-1999. If you live outside of the City of San Diego and would like to schedule a survey, please call 1-888-271-0800.

Certification shows Department's commitment to the environment

The City of San Diego Water Department has been certified by the International Organization of Standardization (ISO) 14001:2004, for its world-class quality and environmental management standards.

The certification is the end result of the Water Department's concerted efforts to provide quality customer service while being environmentally sensitive.

"This is a significant milestone for our Department," said Water Department Director Frank Belock. "It recognizes our commitment to continually improve our performance in respect to quality service and environmental responsibility."

The City of San Diego Water Department is just the second water utility in the nation to reach ISO 14001:2004 certification.