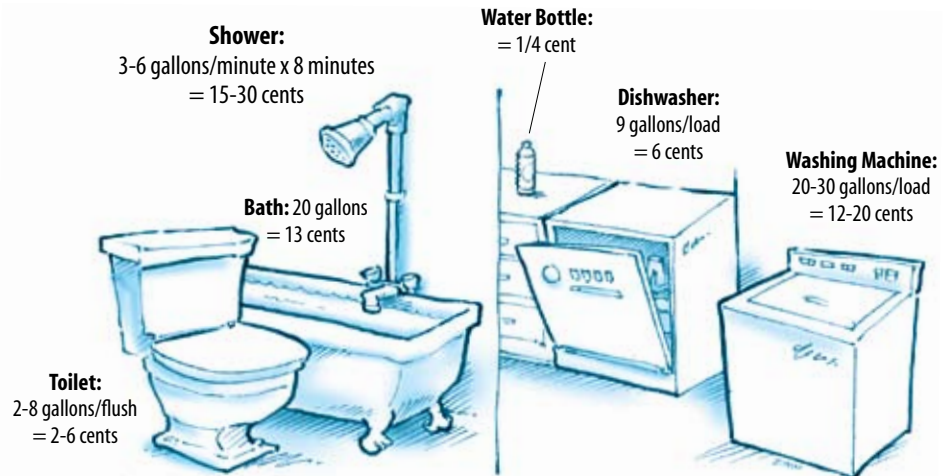




How Much Does Your Water Cost?

Each gallon of City of Ann Arbor water costs about half a penny for both the water and sewer charges. The average Ann Arbor household has three people and uses about 250 gallons of water per day. Water utility bills are based on "water units." One water unit (100 cubic feet) is equivalent to 748 gallons of water. Water bills are calculated and mailed every three months to most users, although some users are billed monthly. The average bill is for 25-30 units of water, or \$134-\$162 per quarter (or \$154-\$180 without the 10% on-time payment discount). How do water costs leap from the pennies per use to \$100+ on quarterly bills? Each water activity adds up: Toilets generally account for about 25% of the daily household water usage, and frequent lawn watering can double water use in the summer. Since 2004, the city's water utility has used a tiered approach to water prices. The lowest water rate is calculated for the first seven water units, with an increased charge for the next 8-28 units, a higher rate for 29-45 units, and the highest rate for over 46 units.



Here are three major ways to reduce expenses and conserve water:

- **Fix leaks.** A running toilet can cost \$400 or more in three months! Add vegetable dye to the toilet tank reservoir and check back in 15 minutes. If the color has migrated into the bowl, you have a leak, even if you can't hear it. A faucet leak of just one drop per second wastes 2,400 gallons/year. Also periodically check for leaks from humidifiers, hot water heaters, refrigerators, and outside faucets or sprinklers.
- **Make water conservation a habit.** Don't leave the tap running while brushing teeth or shaving. Be aware of shower time durations. Purchase low-flow toilets (1.6 gallon per flush vs. 8 gallons/flush). Install aerators on faucets and showers to provide the 'feel' of a full blast of water at a fraction of the flow per minute.
- **Be aware of seasonal water use.** Compare your water bills through the seasons to discover ways to conserve water. Filling pools, watering landscapes, washing cars, and operating water-cooled air conditioners or humidifiers are activities that potentially consume large amounts of water. Outdoors, you may choose to reduce lawn areas, plant native species, apply mulch around plantings, and water only as needed (1 inch of rain or sprinkler water every 10 days).

For more information on water usage and conservation actions, consult the Huron River Watershed Council, www.hrwc.org, 734.769.5123 and the California Urban Water Conservation Council www.H2Ouse.org.

Make July 4th *Dependence on Sump Pumps Day*

Many people use Halloween or another fall holiday as a reminder to check the batteries in their household smoke detectors. This same type of preventive maintenance is worth extending to that hard-working appliance in many homes: the humble sump pump, which pumps ground- and stormwater away from the home to keep the basement dry.

This summer, take the time to make sure your sump pump is working properly. Check your manual, call your local plumbing contractor, and/or check the sump pump maintenance documents available online at www.a2fdd.com for more details.



Basement flooding reporting

Intense rainstorms can potentially overwhelm the city's drainage systems and in rare instances, basement flooding can result. Residents are urged to check their homeowners' insurance

policies to ensure coverage for any property damage from basement flooding. Often this type of coverage is not included in the standard homeowners' policy and residents must request a special rider in order to be covered. Should your home ever experience basement flooding, please follow these steps:

File a Report. Please use the online Citizen Request System on the city's front web page, specifically at <http://www2.a2gov.org/A2CSR/CSRRequest.aspx> to file an online maintenance request (use 'Water System Issue' as the Service Request type in step 2).

If you are unable to use the online Citizen Request System, please phone 734.794.6333.

The City of Ann Arbor tracks instances of basement flooding to identify causes, potential patterns, and opportunities for inclusion in the Footing Drain Disconnect program (www.a2fdd.com).

Here's why your tap water may appear briefly reddish



The City of Ann Arbor Field Services Unit provides annual fire hydrant inspection and system maintenance procedures by flushing water through selected area hydrants from April through November. During this process, you may observe a fire hydrant discharging water from the side opening. On occasion, your tap water may temporarily have an orange or rusty appearance. The water is safe to use. The iron sediment in the water main pipes being disturbed by the hydrant flushing is causing the discoloration. If this occurs, please run your **COLD** water for several minutes to clear your lines. You should also flush your toilets once or twice. The water should run clear within a few minutes. (Running warm water forces the orange water into the water heater, and should be avoided to reduce the mixing of the reddish water with stored water. If your laundry is discolored from rusty water, you can use a product such as "Rover" to help remove temporary laundry coloration. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the hydrant flushing process, please call 734.794.6350 and staff will be glad to assist you. Online announcements of the hydrant flushing schedule is available by subscribing to GovDelivery, as posted on the red envelop on the city's main Web page at www.a2gov.org or by phoning 734.794.6349 for recordings of the weekly areas affected by the hydrant flushing.

Stormwater rate-reduction credits available

You can lower your stormwater bill by taking steps to protect stormwater quality and reduce the amount of water draining from your property through these optional stormwater credits. Learn more and apply on-line at www.a2gov.org/storm or call the Customer Service Center at 734.794.6320.

- Make your home a **RiverSafe Home** partner and save \$1.26/quarter. Review Washtenaw County's online RiverSafe home information and take the free survey online at www.a2gov.org/storm or call **734.222.6860** for a mailed version.
- Install **rain barrels** on your downspouts and save \$1.82/quarter (total, for one or more rain barrels).
- Create a **rain garden, cistern, or drywell** (limited to one of these per property) and save \$2.85/quarter.

Nonresidential, commercial, and residential apartment properties may qualify for additional credits. For more information on the city's stormwater rates, online property assessments, and credit opportunities, please visit: www.a2gov.org/storm.



Prevent backflow!

Some property owners may have already received or will be receiving a letter from the city alerting them to the need to have their backflow prevention device inspected by a licensed plumber with proper qualifications. After receipt of the paperwork from the certifying plumber, the city is required by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources & Environment to inspect the device. Please respond promptly! In addition, everyone can protect themselves from potentially unsafe water or chemicals siphoning backwards into drinking water pipes with these easy actions: Never submerge hoses in buckets, pools, tubs, or sinks. Second, protect yourself by installing inexpensive backflow protection devices on all hoses and threaded faucets in your home or business. These devices are available at hardware and home improvement stores for about \$4-10 each.