

# 2025 Sewer Utility Rates Frequently Asked Questions

May 2025



## What is the purpose of the Sewer Utility? What do sewer rates it pay for?

The Sewer Utility rate is established by Bylaw to pay for all the operating and capital costs to collect and convey waste water from properties for sewer treatment. The operating costs include the costs to transport and treat the sewage at the McLoughlin Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP), owned and operated by the Capital Regional District.

## When and how do rates change?

Every year, staff project expenses for service delivery in the upcoming year and estimate the revenue requirements. A report is then brought before Council in late November or early December outlining the need for a rate adjustment and providing the new proposed rates. If Council is satisfied, the new rates are adopted and put into a Bylaw to permit them to be applied to the utility bills effective January 1<sup>st</sup>.

## How is my bill calculated? How frequently will I receive a bill?

Sewer utility rates are based on the amount of water consumed. The utility rate consists of three components: a flat rate, a Saanich consumption rate and a CRD consumption rate charge. There is a single flat rate applied to every account, while the consumption rate correlates to the lowest of three readings for water usage. The consumption amount is also applied to a CRD consumption rate.

A detailed example of the [calculation](#) can be found on the District's website.

The utility billing period is typically every **4** months (tri-annually).

DATE	METER NO.	NO. OF DAYS	CURRENT READING	PREV READING	CONSUMPTION	AMOUNT
May 1, 2025	A- [REDACTED]	119	2063	1952	111 CUBIC METRES	
May 6, 2025	MONTHLY WATER CHARGE 12.5 MM					30.60
May 6, 2025	REGULAR WATER RATE (A)					234.43
May 6, 2025	SEWER FIXED CHARGE					44.16
May 6, 2025	SEWER USAGE RATE (A)					152.86
May 6, 2025	CRD SEWER TREATMENT CHARGE (A)					193.47

**AMOUNT NOW DUE: 655.52**

### **What are the new sewer utility rates for 2025?**

All District sewer consumption rates remain the same as established for 2024. This is \$1.698 per cubic meter of water consumed using the [sewer calculation methodology](#). The CRD consumption rate has also remained unchanged at \$2.149 per cubic meter of water consumed as determined by the sewer calculation methodology.

The monthly flat rate charge has increased from \$2.58 in 2024 to \$11.05 for 2025 or \$44.16 per (4-month) billing period.

### **What is the average increase I should expect to see on my Sewer Utility bill this year?**

The flat rate increase amounts to \$101.64 more per year, per service connection. Assuming your 2025 water consumption levels remain similar to 2024, the only increase to the utility bill would be for the flat rate increase.

### **Why did my bill go up?**

Sewer revenue requirements are projected to be more than \$33.5 million for 2025. This is an increase of over \$2.8 million from 2024 requiring more revenue to pay for the service provision. The factors contributing to the increase in costs include:


- higher construction costs and additional capital funding for asset replacement based on the *Infrastructure Replacement Funding Strategy* (approved by Council January 29, 2024).
- increases to operating costs such as non-discretionary increases to labour contracts and inflationary costs on equipment/material supply, new positions approved in prior years, and debt servicing.
- increases to the cost for sewage treatment and debt servicing from the CRD

The new monthly flat rate accounts for the additional revenue required for the 2025 budget, allocated equally to all rate payers.

### **Why did the District increase the flat rate this year and not the consumption rate?**

Water consumption is metered and is used as a proxy to calculate the sewer consumption amount for billing purposes and revenue generation.

Recently, staff have been experiencing challenges in consistency predicting water revenue because the rate design relies so heavily on user water consumption. Household consumption levels have been trending downward with increased



conservation practices and low-flow appliances; operating costs continue to rise and Council's endorsement of the update to the Infrastructure Replacement Funding Strategy for capital assets, means rate increases will be needed for capital replacement for the foreseeable future.

To bring more balance to the revenue collection, it was endorsed by Council to begin to move away from a rate based on 90% consumption revenue/ 10% flat rate revenue towards a 50/50 allocation for both water and sewer utility. This year was the first step in shifting to this approach. For more information, refer to the Council meeting from October 28, 2024 (2025 [Water and Sewer Utility Rate Restructuring Report](#)) and January 29, 2024 ([Infrastructure Replacement Funding Strategy Report](#)).

**I read the meeting minutes from the October 28, 2024 Council meeting for the 2025 Water and Sewer Utility Rate Restructuring Report and that “...*The change should have no net impact to taxpayers*”. Is that true?**

No. This was captured in the meeting minutes in a way that it is being mis-understood. There was always the intent to have a rate increase in 2025 that would result in a billing increase to rate payers. Whether the increase was applied to the flat rate or consumption portion of the rate was the topic of the report before Council.

**How do I find out about changes to the rates? Where would I find that information?**

Changes in the utility rates occur as part of the budgeting process in late November or early December every year so that new rates can take effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

A report to Council is prepared by staff identifying the proposed new rate and the basis for the rate change. Reports to Council are posted on the [District's website](#) on Thursdays for meetings the following Monday.

The new rates are adopted by Bylaw and published on the District's website under [Your Utility Bill](#) and [Charges Explained](#).

**How do I voice concerns about rate increases?**

Council meetings are open to the public and members of the public can speak to report agenda items. Refer to the District's website for more information on [registering to speak](#) at a Council meeting or contacting a Council member.

**Further questions about utility billing can be sent [utilitybilling@saanich.ca](mailto:utilitybilling@saanich.ca), or by calling 250-475-5445.**