

Water & Sewer Billing Explanation

How City Water Billing Works

The City of Ithaca bills water and sewer services **quarterly** (every three months).

Although billing cycles are commonly referred to by calendar months (for example, Oct–Dec, Jan–Mar, etc.), the City does not bill strictly by calendar month. Instead, charges are based on **actual meter read dates**. Each bill reflects total building water usage between one meter reading and the next.

Because meter readings rarely fall exactly on the first or last day of a month, billing periods may include a few days from the month before or after the quarter being referenced.

What the Quarterly Bill Includes

Each quarterly invoice from the City typically consists of the following components:

1. Water (Usage-Based)

This charge is based on the total volume of water used by the building during the billing period.

2. Sewer (Usage-Based)

Sewer charges are calculated based on water usage. As water usage increases, sewer charges increase proportionally.

3. Fire Line Fee (Flat Fee)

A fixed charge associated with maintaining fire suppression infrastructure.

4. Stormwater Fee (Flat Fee)

A municipal fee that supports the City's stormwater management system. This charge is not based on water usage.

How Resident Reimbursements Are Calculated

Water and sewer costs are allocated as follows:

1. The total quarterly City bill is divided evenly among the number of residents occupying the building during that billing period.
2. The per-resident amount is then spread across the three months associated with that quarter.
3. Each resident's reimbursement reflects their proportional share of the total quarterly cost.

This method ensures consistency and fairness across the building.

Important Note Regarding Usage

Water usage for the building is cumulative. Even small plumbing issues—particularly continuously running toilets—can significantly increase total building consumption over a 90+ day billing cycle.

Residents are expected to report leaks or plumbing concerns promptly to help minimize unnecessary increases in usage.