

CITY OF SANTA ROSA DEDICATED IRRIGATION TIERED WATER RATE STRUCTURE

In January 2007, the City of Santa Rosa Water Utility implemented a tiered water rate structure for all dedicated irrigation accounts. The tiered water rate structure is focused on promoting outdoor water use efficiency and consists of the following three tiers:

Tier	Monthly Allocation
Tier 1	Up to 125% of the Billing Period Water Budget
Tier 2	125% - 200% of the Billing Period Water Budget
Tier 3	Over 200% of the Billing Period Water Budget

Q. When did the tiered water rate structure go into effect?

A. The tiered water rate structure was implemented in January 2007. It affected bills rendered on or after January 1, 2007.

Q. Why did the City change the rate structure?

A. The City implemented the tiered water rate structure to focus on encouraging efficient irrigation water use. During the summer months, total water use is double the amount of water used during the winter months, and this increase is due to landscape irrigation. The Water Conservation Program analyzed outdoor water use and found that there is widespread inefficiency and over irrigation in landscape watering. The city designed the water rate structure to focus on reducing outdoor water use.

Q. Are all customers billed under the tiered rate structure?

A. No. The tiered water rate structure applies to Single Family Residential (SFR) accounts and dedicated irrigation accounts. Dedicated irrigation accounts are those accounts where a single water meter provides irrigation water only.

Q. What is the Billing Period Water Budget?

A. The Billing Period Water Budget is the amount of water, in gallons, needed to irrigate the specific area of landscape served by the Dedicated Irrigation Account for the days

covered by the billing period. The landscape measurements have been collected by Water Conservation Program Staff over the last few years through field measurements, landscape plans, or self-reporting by the customer.

Q. How is my water budget calculated?

A. Each billing period water budget is calculated in arrears using the sites landscape measurements, the evapotranspiration rate for the days covered by the billing period, the effective rainfall for the days covered by the billing period, and a conversion factor, converting square feet to gallons. The calculation is:

$$\text{Billing Period Water Budget} = \{ [ET_o - EP] \times [LA_h + (LA_m \times 0.6)] \times CF \}$$

Where:

- **ET_o (Reference Evapotranspiration)** = Evapotranspiration is defined as the amount of water used by the plants (transpiration) and evaporated from the soil (evaporation) measured in inches as determined by the Santa Rosa California Irrigation Management Information Systems (CIMIS) weather stations. Reference Evapotranspiration is a standard measurement of evapotranspiration for cool-season turf. The Billing Period ET_o is the sum of the daily ET_o for the specific days of the billing cycle.

- **EP (Effective Precipitation)** = The depth of rainfall, measured in inches by the Santa Rosa CIMIS weather stations, that offsets ET_o . It is assumed that only 2/3 of total rainfall offsets ET_o . The Billing Period effective precipitation is for the specific days of the billing cycle.
- **LA_h (landscape area high)** = Square footage of site's landscape area consisting of high water use plants or uses (turf grass, ornamental water features, annuals, plants in containers and plants with a plant factor greater than 0.6)
- **LA_m (landscape area moderate)** = Square footage of site's landscape area consisting of moderate and low water use plants (plants with a plant factor of 0.6 or less)
- **CF (Conversion factor)** = 0.623, the number that converts square feet to gallons

- Rebates for improving the efficiency of your irrigation systems
- Rebates for removing your turf and replacing it with low water use alternatives
- Rebates for rainwater harvesting
- Free landscape surveys, where expert staff will review your irrigation system and landscape and make recommendations for improving efficiency and program settings
- Weekly lawn watering and drip watering information through our Turf Time line, (707) 543-3466, or online at www.srcity.org/turftime
- Tips and information for reducing water use

Q. How do I know my landscape measurements?

A. Customers can call Utility Billing at 707-543-3150 or the Water Conservation Program at 707-543-3985 to find out the landscape measurements on record. In addition, every month, customers receive a message on their dedicated irrigation bill entitled "Landscape Water Use Report." The report states whether or not the site is irrigating efficiently based on the water needs of the site's landscape.

Q. What if I don't agree with the landscape measurements on record? Can I have the landscape measurements verified?

A. If you believe the landscape square footage data is incorrect, you can ask the Water Conservation Program staff to come out and verify the landscape square footage measurements. They will meet you at the site, have you operate your irrigation controller, and measure your landscape with a measuring wheel.

Q. How can I reduce my water use?

A. If you think you are using water inefficiently, the Water Conservation Program offers many programs and incentives for reducing water use, identifying water waste and improving water use efficiency. To help reduce water use, the Water Conservation program provides:

In addition, the Water Conservation Program provides landscape information on their website: www.srcity.org/wc or you can call the water conservation hotline at 707-543-3985 for additional information.