



### **Water & Wastewater FAQ:**

#### **What hours can I pay my bill at Town Hall?**

Monday-Thursday: 7am-6pm – 155 N Tegner Street, Wickenburg, AZ 85390

#### **How are my charges determined for wastewater:**

In Wickenburg, the wastewater (sewer) charge isn't based on how much sewage is actually measured—since there's no meter on your drain. Instead, like most towns, it's calculated from your water use. Your wastewater rate is higher due to the cost of maintaining the wastewater treatment plant, which is significantly higher than running a water distribution system.

Here's how the Town determines rates example:

#### **System 1 (South System – “Wickenburg Utilities”)**

Example: A single-family home with a 1" meter

- Base wastewater fee: \$42.38 per month
- Volume (winter average water use): assume 5,000 gallons/month.
- Volume rate (System 1, 1" meter): \$5.07 per 1,000 gallons

Calculation:

- $5 \times \$5.07 = \$25.35$
- Add base fee \$42.38
- Total monthly wastewater bill = \$67.73 plus fees

#### **System 2 (North System – “Wickenburg Ranch”)**

Example: A single-family home with a 1" meter

- Base wastewater fee: \$72.52 per month
- Volume (winter average water use): assume 5,000 gallons/month.
- Volume rate (System 2, 1" meter): \$3.02 per 1,000 gallons

Calculation:

- $5 \times \$3.02 = \$15.10$
- Add base fee \$72.52
- Total monthly wastewater bill = \$87.62 plus fees

## **What is System 1 and System 2? Different Systems, Different Timing**

Because the Town has multiple systems (south vs north), they have different timing for when rate increases are applied, because each has different cost structures, infrastructure, usage, and financial situations. System 1 and System 2 are completely separate systems, and each system has its own budget.

## **How can you save money on your bill?**

1. Call the town or go online and fill out the form for Sewer Averaging.
2. Take advantage of XpressBillPay. You can sign up for alerts pertaining to your bill such as notification when bill is sent and due date . This will help avoid late fees.
3. From month-to-month monitor your usage. This could indicate leaks in your plumbing system.

## **What is Sewer Averaging?**

Sewer Averaging is the method used to determine your wastewater charges for the year.

1. How it works: We calculate your average monthly water use during the winter months (January–March). Winter is chosen because outdoor irrigation is typically lower, so most of the water you use is assumed to flow into the wastewater system.
2. Your wastewater billing amount: This winter average becomes the basis for your wastewater charges for the rest of the year.
3. Eligibility: To qualify, you must have history of a full billing cycle for all of January, February, and March at the current residence.
4. Annual update: Sewer averages are recalculated each year, and any adjustments to your wastewater averaging will take effect on July 1.

## **Why is my bill higher this month than last month?**

Review your bill for your usage for the last three months. If there has been an increase this is typically tied to leaks in your irrigation system, toilet running, pool/hot tub maintenance issues.

1. Understand your total bill: water, wastewater, sanitation, electric. See example for layout of typical bill with all services.
2. Did you host guest in your home for an extended period of time?
3. If you still have questions? Please call our utility billing division at (928) 684-5451 x1520. One of our customer service representatives will be happy to assist you.

## **I think my water meter is reading incorrectly. What are my options?**

Customers have the option of having their meter tested by an independent company not affiliated with the Town. Though a Meter Test Fee is required at the time this service is ordered, this fee is refundable if the meter is found to be over-reading. Should the meter be over-reading an adjustment will be issued during the next billing cycle. The customer forfeits this testing fee if the meter is found to be operating within normal range or is under-billing the customer.

## **Is it possible for a water meter to “jump” or “over-read,” resulting in a high bill?**

Modern water meters are precision engineered equipment designed to be extremely accurate. Therefore, it is very rare for a meter to malfunction resulting in a higher reading than the amount of water that actually passes through it. Though only the flow of water can register usage on a meter, over time dirt, other debris, and aging meters can actually cause a water meter to become slower, resulting in a lower reading and a reduced water bill.

## **Why are my rates going up?**

1. A rate study was done in 2023. That study updated the cost-of-service and rate design analysis.
2. The purpose of the fee/ rate adjustments is to generate enough revenue to cover operating expenses, reserve requirements, and to bring the fees more in line with industry standards and best practices.
3. The initial rate increases for System 1 (south system – “Wickenburg Utilities”) took effect July 1, 2024. *Refer to the rate sheet for future increases.*
4. The initial rate increase for the System 2 (north system - “Wickenburg Ranch”) went into effect January 1, 2025. *Refer to the rate sheet for future increases.*
5. The water and wastewater funds (System 1 & 2) are what are known as Enterprise Funds, meaning they are self-sufficient through user fees rather than subsidized by tax dollars. Utility rates are approved by the Town Council. These rates are set up to collect only as much revenue as it costs to run the service, with a portion being set aside for infrastructure repair and improvements.

## **Underlying reasons for rate increase:**

### **1. Rising operational costs**

The cost to run a water/wastewater system goes up over time: energy, chemicals, equipment maintenance, staffing, and other inputs all tend to increase with inflation or market pressures.

### **2. Infrastructure maintenance and improvements**

Aging pipes, treatment facilities, pumps, and other infrastructure need upkeep or replacement. Ensuring reliability and water quality often means capital investment. Avoiding failures (leaks, breakdowns) requires continual maintenance and sometimes upgrades.

### **3. Reserve requirements & financial health**

Utilities often need to maintain reserves (i.e. money set aside for emergencies, unforeseen costs, or future investment). If revenues have lagged costs, reserves can drop. To avoid deficits and ensure long-term sustainability, rates must sometimes be raised.

### **4. Aligning with standard cost of service / industry best practices**

The rate design seeks to reflect what it actually costs to serve customers. Sometimes fees haven't kept up with costs or the usage patterns change. Rate studies aim to adjust rates so that customers are paying in line with how much service they use, and so that different systems are fairly funded. The last rate increase voted by town council was in 2014. That increase was only 20 cents per year for five years.

## **Why is there a difference in the fees with the new rates in System 1 & System 2?**

### **Separate Infrastructure**

#### **1. System 1 (South / "Wickenburg Utilities"):**

- a. Serves the historic core of Wickenburg.
- b. Infrastructure is much older - pipes, pumps, treatment facilities.
- c. Requires more staffing, maintenance, repair, and replacement work.

#### **2. System 2 (North / "Wickenburg Ranch"):**

- a. Newer system, built more recently with modern materials.
- b. Infrastructure is in better shape, with lower immediate maintenance costs.
- c. Future expansion of the facilities at Wickenburg Ranch will be funded by the developer.

### **Different Operating Costs**

1. **System 1** has higher energy, chemical, and labor costs to operate its treatment facilities and maintain aging lines.
2. **System 2** is more efficient and requires less day-to-day expense at this stage.

### **Customer Base Size & Density**

1. **System 1** serves a larger population with mixed customers (residential + commercial). There are fewer customers per linear foot of sewer infrastructure in-town vs. Wickenburg Ranch.
2. **System 2** serves primarily Wickenburg Ranch, which is still growing. With fewer customers, costs are spread across a smaller base, which influences rate structure.

### **Capital Improvement Needs**

1. **System 1**: Significant upgrades are needed to keep the system reliable, replacements, treatment plant investments, and meeting new regulatory standards. Those capital costs drive higher rates.
2. **System 2**: Still relatively new, so major capital projects aren't needed yet. The Town is saving for future capital projects for preventative maintenance.

## Example of Town of Wickenburg Utility bill:

TOWN OF WICKENBURG 155 N. TEGNER ST., STE. A WICKENBURG, ARIZONA 85390				UTILITY BILLING (928) 668-0520 PAYABLE AT TOWN HALL			
CURRENT CHARGES DUE AND PAYABLE 25 DAYS AFTER BILL DATE							
NAME:						BILL DATE:	09/18/25
LOCATION:						CURRENT CHARGES DUE:	10/13/25
ACCOUNT:						PREVIOUS READ: WA 08/18/2025 EL 08/18/2025	# OF DAYS 28
DATE READ	DESCRIPTION	METER READING		FACTOR	USAGE	CURRENT CHARGE	
		PRESENT	PREVIOUS				
	Adjustment(s) and/or Balance Transfer(s)					.00	
09/15/2025	ELECTRIC - Base & Usage	45811	44778	1	1033	100.53	
	WATER - Base Fee					30.87	
09/15/2025	WATER - Usage Fee	269	265	1	4	11.16	
	WASTEWATER - Usage Fee				4	20.28	
	WASTEWATER - Base				1	31.01	
	SANITATION - Service Fee				1	27.00	
	MANDATED TAX					.03	
	SALES TAX					12.12	
	LATE PAYMENT PENALTY					8.96	
	ELECTRIC - Power Supply Adjust					22.42	
DEPOSIT APPLIED						.00	
To pay your bill online you can visit our website at <a href="http://www.wickenburgaz.gov/1432/Utilities">www.wickenburgaz.gov/1432/Utilities</a> and select the pay now option.							
USAGE COMPARISON		PREVIOUS BALANCE		CURRENT CHARGES		TOTAL DUE	
	Current Yr						
	Prior Yr						
ELECTRIC:	1,033						
WATER:	4	179.18		264.38		443.56	
PAYMENTS RECEIVED AFTER 4:00 P.M. WILL BE POSTED ON THE NEXT BUSINESS DAY.							
The following employees are authorized to provide information about this communication: Revenue clerk at 928-668-0520 or Tazana at 928-668-0526 <a href="mailto:tazana@wickenburgaz.gov">tazana@wickenburgaz.gov</a>							
LAST PYMT: 09/29/2025 443.56CR							
WHEN PAYING IN PERSON, PLEASE BRING YOUR ENTIRE BILL. WHEN PAYING BY MAIL OR USING OUR AFTER HOURS DROP BOX, PLEASE REMIT THE LOWER PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT.				TOWN OF WICKENBURG 155 N. TEGNER ST., STE. A WICKENBURG, ARIZONA 85390			
ACCOUNT:		CURRENT CHARGES DUE	TOTAL DUE	AMOUNT REMITTED			
		10/13/2025	443.56				
BILL DATE: 09/18/2025				Contribution For Low Income (CAP Office) Assistance \$ _____			
JAMES N WALMA PO BOX 107 WICKENBURG, AZ 85390							
[ ] Mark if address change requested on reverse side							