



Aqua Facts

May 2008

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Helpful Phone Numbers:

Customer Call Center:

(210) 922-1221
8am to 7pm weekdays

Emergency Services:

(210) 354-6500
or (210) 922-2141

BexarMet Website:

www.bexarmet.org

Report Water Waste:

waterwasters@bexarmet.org

BexarMet Holiday:

Monday, May 26 – Memorial Day

BexarMet Board Approves Rate Hike Effective On July 1, 2008

Beginning July 1, 2008, the average BexarMet residential customer will see a \$4.39 increase in their water bill as the result of a 14% rate hike approved by the BexarMet Board on April 24, 2008.

The average BexarMet residential customer uses approximately 10,000 gallons on a monthly basis, representing about 75% of the total number of customers. Only five percent of BexarMet residential customers use more than 25,000 gallons per month. This rate increase for residential and commercial customers will recover costs due to higher cost of service resulting from increased energy, fuel, labor and construction material costs and other factors. Additionally, BexarMet has completed significant capital improvements resulting in increased financing costs. The additional revenue would also help meet expenses and allow continuation of BexarMet's capital improvement project plans across the District.

To see examples of the new rates, click on the information links at www.bexarmet.org/customersvc.

BexarMet Offers Free Sprinkler Audits!

Automatic sprinkler systems are the ultimate in convenience for keeping your landscape healthy without spending a lot of time monitoring and dragging hose sprinklers around. If you have begun using your home's automatic sprinkler system and experienced increased water bills in recent weeks, consider a free sprinkler audit from BexarMet! BexarMet staff will do a quick check of your system to make sure the heads are in good condition and aimed properly. In addition, we will analyze the run times and number of days per week your system is running and compare that to the type of landscape you have and depth of your soil to arrive at system settings customized for you.

Most automatic sprinkler systems are set to apply two to four times more water than the landscape needs, resulting in wasteful runoff down the street. If you are interested in a free sprinkler audit, contact BexarMet Customer Service at (210) 922-1221 to schedule a time. The audit takes no more than an hour and may result in significant reduction of water waste as well as a lower water bill.

Need a Speaker?

BexarMet offers educational presentations on xeriscaping, efficient water use, rebate programs and other water-related topics for school or neighborhood association. Contact BexarMet at (210) 357-5705 to schedule.

YEAR-ROUND WATER RESTRICTIONS IN EFFECT

- Sprinkler irrigation prohibited between 10am and 8pm
- Runoff and water waste prohibited.
- Hand water any time.
- Charity car washes at commercial car wash locations only.

Water Bill Calculator Available on Website

BexarMet now offers a free water bill calculator on our website at www.bexarmet.org/billcalculator. Simply enter the number of gallons consumed into the calculator and get a calculation of all of the fees and charges expected for that amount of water. This handy tool is accessible anywhere you can log on to the Internet. Try it today!

Fire Hydrant Flushing Program Protects Water Quality

Fire hydrants serve more of a purpose than just providing water for emergency personnel to extinguish fires. They serve as a means to test system pressure and flow, provide metered water for construction projects and serve as an outlet for water quality flushing.

Flushing fire hydrants is necessary to prevent stagnation and maintain proper disinfectant residual levels in the water. In addition, periodic flushing removes sediment and other particles that have settled in the main after a repair or main break.

Sometimes fire hydrants are used to determine the flow potential and pressure in an area as part of system analysis or as a pre-test for adding new neighborhoods or customers to the system.

Lastly, fire hydrants are used as withdrawal points for water trucks on construction projects. Construction companies rent fire hydrant meters from BexarMet in order to pay for the amount of water they use. The meter is attached to one of the "ears" on the side of the fire hydrant. The fire hydrant meter is accompanied by backflow preventer assembly to keep potential contaminants in the truck's tank from being drawn back into the water main and contaminating the system. If you see a water truck with a hose attached to an unmetered fire hydrant, call BexarMet Emergency Services at (210) 922-2141 as soon as possible and report the location and a description of the truck. Not only is this an act of water theft, but it can potentially contaminate the water YOU drink. Theft of water from an unmetered BexarMet fire hydrant carries a \$2,500 fine.

PRVs and Backflow Assemblies Now Require Expansion Tanks

Changes to the Uniform, International and Standard Plumbing Codes require that an expansion tank be installed in new construction, retrofitting or remodeling projects where a backflow preventer, a Pressure Reducing Valve (PRV) or replacement either of these is performed at a home or business. Expansion tanks are very small and installed very close to the hot water heater.

As water is heated, it expands slightly (thermal expansion) causing increased pressure within the pipes. Thermal expansion of water in a closed plumbing system can create a number of annoying and potentially dangerous problems, including: buildup of unusually high pressure in a system (even with a PRV installed); pressure surges; and the chronic or continuous dripping of faucets and temperature and pressure (T&P) relief valves on hot water heaters. Thermal expansion can also lead to a ruptured or distorted water heater and possible failure of plumbing fittings and connections inside of the building, or worse.

Remember, a PRV is recommended when the average water pressure at your location is above 80 pounds per square inch (psi). The cost of a PRV reflects the quality of the PRV. If you purchase an inexpensive PRV, expect it to last one to three years or less before needing replacement. If you live in a large home, purchase a quality PRV (more than \$500) that will do the job and is easy to maintain.

You should have your PRV and backflow assembly inspected annually by a plumber for proper operation.

Customer Cutoff Valves Save Time and Money

Changes to the Uniform, International and Standard Plumbing Codes require water shutoff valves between the water meter and the place of residence or business. These simple valves allow you to turn off the water at your location without calling the water utility to come and turn off the water at the meter. Sometimes, it takes several minutes or more after the call before the utility worker can come and turn off the water, resulting in hundreds of gallons of wasted water. BexarMet offers leak adjustments for repaired water leaks, but you will still have to pay for some of the lost water.

If you have a water shutoff valve at your home, be sure to maintain it annually with a little bit of spray lubricant to ensure that it will open and close smoothly when you need to use it. Wrap the valve with a rag or other item to protect it from water and dirt and reduce the possibility of rust or corrosion to the metal parts.