

Homeowner's Guide to
Water and Sewer
for the
Town of Medfield



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Welcome to Medfield!

Whether you're new to town or have been here for a while, we want to extend a warm welcome. This guide is designed to help you understand the town's water and sewer systems.

As a homeowner, understanding these systems is essential for maintaining your property, preventing costly repairs, and ensuring the efficient use of resources. This guide will help you:

- **Reduce Costs:** By monitoring your water usage and addressing issues early, you can avoid high water bills.
- **How to Read Your Bill:** We will cover common questions and guide you through understanding your water bill.
- **How to Read Your Meter:** Learn how to track your water usage by reading your water meter accurately.
- **Prevent Problems:** Identifying leaks or blockages early can save you from expensive repairs and unexpected emergencies.
- **Conserve Resources:** Water conservation is crucial for both the environment and your wallet. Efficient water usage ensures that this valuable resource is available for the future.
- **Clarify Responsibilities:** Knowing where your responsibility ends and where the town's begins will ensure that you contact the right people for assistance.

Overview of Water & Sewer Systems

Before diving into the details, it's important to first confirm whether your property is connected to the town's water and sewer systems. Some areas of Medfield are serviced by the town, while others may use septic systems and wells. If you're unsure about your property's status, contact the town water department to verify your connection to town services.

Town Water System:

- **Water Supply:** The town provides a centralized water system that delivers water to homes through pipes, which is monitored by your water meter.
- **Water Meter:** This device measures the amount of water your home uses. The readings from your water meter help determine your water bill.
- **Water Service Line:** The town is responsible for maintaining the water service lines from the main to the curb stop. Homeowners are responsible for the line from the curb stop to their house. A curb stop is the unground shut off where your service starts. This curb stop is the shut off to your specific water line. The Curb stop is normally located at the property line.

Town Sewer System:

- **Sewer Lines:** The town also maintains the public sewer lines, which transport wastewater from homes to the Medfield Waste Water Treatment Facility.
- **Sewer Connection:** If your property is connected to the town's sewer system, your wastewater travels through pipes to the treatment plant. Homeowners are responsible for the sewer line from the house to the main sewer line.

Understanding Your Water Meter

How to Read Your Water Meter

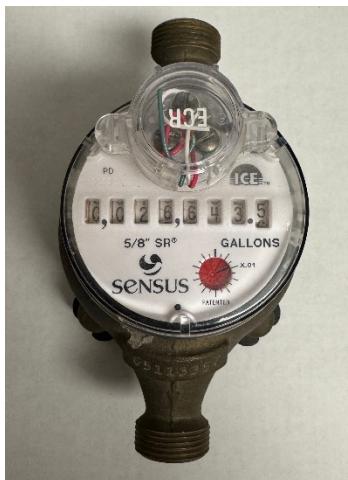
Step 1: Locate Your Water Meter

Your water meter is typically found in your basement or utility closet. It will be close to a outside wall, as this is where the outside water line enters your home. The MXU (Meter Transponder Unit) is a digital device that allows the water department to remotely read your meter. The MXU can be mounted near your water meter or even on the outside of your house.

Step 2: Identify the Meter's Dials or Digital Display

Take a picture of the current reading. If you check the meter again after a day or two, the reading may change depending on your water usage.

- **Dial Meters:** Look for small, numbered dials that show your water usage.
- **Digital Meters:** The reading will appear as a number on the display.



Step 3: Record the Reading

Write down the current reading. Compare it with your last reading to track your water usage.

Tip:

Regularly check your water meter for any sudden increases in usage, which could indicate a leak. Keep in mind that water usage is generally higher in the summer months due to activities like watering lawns, washing cars, filling pools, and hand watering plants. If you notice unexpected increases during the winter, it could point to an issue. Additionally, look for wet spots or unexplained puddles around your home or yard, which can be signs of a hidden leak. Silent leaks, especially in toilets or irrigation systems, can be hard to spot. Make sure to inspect your toilet for any water dripping at the back and regularly check your irrigation system for broken sprinkler heads or faulty timers.

If you have any questions about high usage, please call us for more information at 508-906-3003.

Sensus MXU System Transponder

The Town of Medfield is transitioning to a digital read system with the Sensus MXU (Meter Transceiver Unit). This advanced system will digitally communicate with your water meter to provide real-time readings, improving the accuracy and efficiency of water usage tracking.



1. Function of the MXU:

The Sensus MXU is a small device that works in conjunction with your water meter. It collects your current water usage data and transmits it wirelessly to the town's data collection system. This eliminates the need for manual readings and ensures more accurate and efficient meter readings.

2. How it Works:

The MXU uses radio frequency (RF) signals to send data from your meter to the town. The system then transmits this data to the water department. This process is quick, reliable, and provides near real-time meter readings, allowing for more effective water usage monitoring.

3. Benefits:

***Accuracy:** The MXU ensures accurate readings, reducing the possibility of human error.

***Convenience:** There will no longer be a need for a town representative to physically visit your property to read the meter.

***Remote Monitoring:** The system can detect issues like leaks or unusual usage patterns, allowing for quicker identification and resolution.

The Customer Portal:

A key feature of this system upgrade is the introduction of a customer portal for residents. This portal will allow you to monitor your water usage in real-time. By accessing your water data directly, you can catch leaks or unusual usage patterns sooner—long before you receive your next billing statement. This can lead to early leak detection and more control over your water consumption.

Please Note: The town is not responsible for monitoring individual residents' water usage. The customer portal will be provided for residents to monitor their own usage.

What This Means for You:

With the Sensus MXU system upgrades, the town can provide more accurate, reliable, and timely water readings. This means:

- **No more manual readings:** The system automatically transmits usage data, reducing human error and delays.
- **Accurate bills:** Your water bill will more closely reflect your actual usage, ensuring fairness in billing.
- **Early Leak Detection:** The system can help identify unusual changes in water usage, allowing you to detect potential leaks earlier than before.

Understanding your Water\Sewer Bill

How to Read Your Water Bill

Understanding your water bill is essential for managing your water usage and ensuring you're being billed accurately. Here's a step-by-step guide to help you read your bill:

1. Account Information

At the top of your bill, you will find your account number, service address, bill date, and due date. The bill number is located in the right-hand corner of the bill. Double-check that this information is correct to ensure the bill is for the right property.

The Billing Period is the timeframe in which the meter reading is taken.

2. Meter Readings

Your bill will include two meter readings:

- **Previous Reading:** The meter reading from the last billing period.
- **Current Reading:** The most recent reading from your water meter.

The difference between these two readings shows how many gallons of water you used during the billing cycle. This is measured in thousands of gallons.

3. Charges Breakdown

Your bill will list different charges based on your water and sewer usage:

- **Water Charges:** The cost for the water you've used. This is based on a tier system, and the current rates can be found on the back of the bill.
- **Sewer Charges:** This is also based on a tier system, but charged at 75% of your water usage for residential properties. (25% off is applied to accounts for watering activities that do not contribute to sewer usage.) Commercial properties are responsible for 100% of their water usage for sewer charges.

4. Payment Information

This section shows your total amount due, due date, and any late fees if applicable. Be sure to pay by the due date to avoid additional charges.

Payment options include:

- **Online payments:** Available only during the bill date and due date.
- **In-person payments:** At the Tax Collectors office.
- **Payment by check:** Via mail.

 TOWN OF MEDFIELD MASSACHUSETTS 459 MAIN ST., MEDFIELD, MA 02052-2009 508-906-3004 WATER AND SEWER DEPARTMENT SEMI-ANNUAL WATER AND SEWER BILL				2.										
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BILLING PERIOD		METER READING												
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VERY IMPORTANT MESSAGES Unpaid water/sewer bills constitute a lien on real estate (Section 42A to 42F inclusive of Chapter 40 of the General Laws). On October 1st of each year, and every October 1st thereafter, every day past due will AUTOMATICALLY post as a lien to the property's real estate taxes. Customers have 60 days from bill date to dispute charges.														
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PAYMENT: PAYABLE WITHIN 30 DAYS FROM BILL DATE. SUBJECT TO INTEREST CHARGES OF 12% PER ANNUM IF NOT PAID IN 30 DAYS														
PLEASE RETURN THIS STUB WITH YOUR PAYMENT. TOWN OF MEDFIELD 459 MAIN STREET, MEDFIELD, MA 02052-2009														
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PAYMENT INFORMATION: MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: TOWN OF MEDFIELD PAY ONLINE @ WWW.TOWN.MEDFIELD.NET , SELECT UNIPAY.														
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WATER AND SEWER RATE INFORMATION

*WATER RATE 1 to 10,000 gallons \$76.93 base charge 0,001 - 35,000 gallons \$6.97 per 1,000 gallons 35,001 - 70,000 gallons \$10.81 per 1,000 gallons Over 70,000 gallons \$15.31 per 1,000 gallons	
*SEWER RATE (the same for residential and commercial) - 10,000 gallons \$118.38 base charge ver 10,000 gallons \$12.21 per 1,000 gallons based on 75% of water usage (residential) based on 100% of water usage (commercial)	
1. Residential and Commercial water and sewer bills are mailed two times a year or every six months. 2. Payments MUST be received by the Treasurer/Collector's office within 30 days of issuance of bill. Interest at 12% per annum will accrue on overdue balances from the first day the payment is overdue until payment is made. 3. If water and sewer bills are not paid by the next Real Estate Tax assessment, bills will be included with the property's next real estate tax bill and collected in the same manner as Real Estate Taxes which includes the accrual of interest at a rate of 14% per annum and additional lien charges. All water and sewer bills not paid by the due date constitute a LIEN against the property (MGL Ch. 42A-F). 3. The owner of the property where the service is provided is liable for any water and sewer charges associated with the property. 5. Failure of the property owner to receive his bill, DOES NOT relieve him of the obligation of payment nor of the penalty for nonpayment of all the charges accrued during his ownership. 6. Please remember that the summer water usage is reflected on the bill issued in October and can have a tendency to be higher than the winter water usage, which is reflected on the bill in April. 7. If you wish to discontinue a water or sewer service or transfer the service to another party, a meter reading MUST take place and a final water and sewer bill will be prepared. Final water and sewer bills are prepared Monday through Thursday. Appointments MUST be made 48 hours in advance with the Water and Sewer Department, by calling (508)-906-3004. The final bill can be picked up and paid at the Treasurer/Collector's office.	
The Medfield Water and Sewer Department would like to remind residents that what goes down the drain eventually gets into surface waters and potentially our drinking water. Dumping of solvents, used oil and toxic chemicals down storm water drains can be a major pollution problem and a threat to the environment. The Water and Sewer Department also encourages decreasing the use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers due to their adverse effect on the environment.	

Key for Front of Bill:

1. Service Address
2. Bill Number
3. Account Number
4. Bill Date
5. Due Date
6. Billing Period
7. Services
8. Previous Read
9. Current Read
10. Calculated usage (Thousand Gallons)
11. Charges
12. Past due
13. Late Charges
14. Current Charges
15. Total of all charges due, past and present
16. Account Number
17. Bill Date
18. Amount Due in Full
19. Mailing Address

Key for Back of Bill:

1. Water Rate Tier System breakdown
2. Sewer Rate Tier System breakdown
3. Basic rules and regulations about Water payments and rights.

FAQs – Frequently Asked Water\Sewer Billing Questions:

How often does Medfield send water/sewer bills?

We send water/sewer bills twice a year, covering six months of usage each time. You can expect to receive a bill in November and May. If you do not see a bill in November or May, please call the office to check on your account at 508-906-3003.

I am selling my home. How do I close my water and sewer account?

To schedule a final water\sewer reading for your account, please call our office at 508-906-3003. Readings will be scheduled 7-10 days prior to the closing date. An appointment will be scheduled in the morning to service the meter and auto reader on your home to make sure all are in working order.

I just bought a home in Medfield. Do I need to activate my water and sewer account?

The water and sewer account will be automatically transferred during the real estate transaction closing by the Norfolk County Assessors and received about a month later. If you wish to check on the account to make sure it is in your name please call us at 508-906-3003.

What is tiered billing?

Medfield employs a tiered billing system, where the cost per unit of water and sewer increases with higher usage across four tiers. In the summer, activities such as irrigation, lawn watering, or filling a pool can lead to higher bills as these higher usage levels fall into higher tiers. Conversely, winter bills may be lower due to reduced outdoor water use. For more details on the tier system and current rates, please refer to the rate sheet here.

Why is my bill higher than normal?

Several factors could contribute to a higher bill: recent rate increases, a new meter installation replacing a stopped meter, a leaky faucet or toilet, or an extended period of use by a sprinkler system. Additionally, check for leaks in your irrigation system or house. A leak will not always show a puddle on the floor. If you have any questions about high usage, please call us for more information.

How to Identify a Water Leak

How to Identify a Water Leak

Water leaks can be costly if not identified and repaired early. Here's how to spot them:

Signs of a Potential Water Leak:

- **Unexplained Increase in Your Water Bill:** A sudden spike in your water usage, especially if your habits haven't changed, may indicate a leak.
- **Damp Spots or Wet Areas:** Look for wet patches around pipes, floors, walls, or ceilings—especially near areas where plumbing is located.
- **Dripping Sounds or Running Water:** If you hear water running when no faucets are turned on, this could be a sign of a hidden leak. Check all toilets, as leaks can be silent and go unnoticed.
- **Water Stains:** Discoloration or water stains on walls or ceilings, especially near plumbing fixtures, can indicate a leak.
- **Low Water Pressure:** A drop in water pressure, especially when using multiple fixtures, could signal a leak in the system.

If you notice any of these signs, it's important to investigate further as soon as possible to prevent further damage and avoid wasting water.

What to Do If You Suspect a Leak:

1. **Check Your Water Meter:** Turn off all water fixtures in your home and check your water meter. If it's still running, you likely have a leak.
2. **Inspect Plumbing Fixtures:** Look for visible signs of leaks around faucets, pipes, and toilets. Ensure all fixtures are tightly closed.
3. **Contact a Professional:** If you can't find the source of the leak or if it's hidden behind walls or under floors, consider contacting a plumber for further inspection.
4. **Check for Outdoor Leaks:** If you have a sprinkler system, garden hose, or pool, check these areas for leaks as well.

Who to Call for Assistance

If you suspect a water leak or need help determining who is responsible for repairs, here's what to do:

Medfield Water Department:

Phone Number: 508-906-3003

Contact the Medfield Water Department for assistance with any water issues, including leaks in the public water system. They can provide guidance on troubleshooting, reporting issues, and understanding your responsibilities.

Who is Responsible for Repairs?

Before the Curb Stop:

If the leak is before the curb stop (in the town's system), the town is responsible for repairing the leak.

After the Curb Stop:

If the leak is after the curb stop (on your property), the homeowner is responsible for repairs. This typically includes any pipes or fixtures from the curb stop to your home.

What to Expect When You Contact the Water Department:

- **Identification of the Issue:** The town will help you identify if the leak is in the town's system or on your property.
- **Inspection and Assistance:** The town may send a technician to check for issues within the public water system, but they will not address issues on private property.
- **Next Steps:** If the issue is on your property, they will inform you of your responsibility to repair it, and you may need to contact a plumber or irrigation company (if applicable) to resolve the issue. The town will provide a list of contractors that specialize in repairs and are licensed in town.

Water Conservation

Water Conservation Tips

Conserving water is essential for both the environment and your finances. By making small adjustments in how you use water, you can help reduce your environmental footprint and save on your water bill.

Why Conserve Water:

- **Environmental Benefits:**

Clean water is a finite resource. By conserving it, we help preserve our natural ecosystems and ensure that this valuable resource is available for future generations. Reducing water usage also helps decrease energy consumption (for water heating) and lowers the impact on local water sources.

- **Financial Benefits:**

Conserving water not only helps the environment but also reduces your water bill. Small changes, like fixing leaks and using efficient appliances, can lead to significant savings over time. By using less water, you can cut costs on your utility bill and lower the need for extensive plumbing repairs down the road.

Practical Tips to Save Water:

1. **Fix Leaks Promptly:**

A dripping faucet or running toilet can waste hundreds of gallons of water each year. Be sure to fix any leaks as soon as you notice them. Not only will this save water, but it will also help avoid unnecessary increases in your water bill.(see section 4 for “How to Identify a Water Leak”)

2. **Use Water-Efficient Appliances:**

Install low-flow showerheads, faucets, and toilets, which use less water while still providing the same functionality. Energy-efficient dishwashers and washing machines can also reduce water consumption significantly.

3. **Reduce Shower Time:**

Try to cut down on the amount of time you spend in the shower. Even a 5-minute reduction can save gallons of water each day. Consider turning off the water while you lather or shampoo to save even more.

4. **Turn Off the Tap When Not in Use:**

Don't leave the water running while brushing your teeth, washing dishes, or scrubbing your hands. Turning off the tap when you don't need it can save gallons of water throughout the day.

5. **Use Drought-Resistant Landscaping and Water Lawns Wisely:**

Choose native plants and drought-resistant grasses that require less water for maintenance. Water your lawn in the early morning or late evening to reduce evaporation and avoid wasting water. Be mindful of your irrigation system and avoid overwatering. Make sure your sprinkler heads are not aimed toward paved areas- the driveway, sidewalk, or street.

6. Use a nozzle on your hose when watering outside plants or washing your car. Don't let an open hose continue to run unabated.

Basic Sewer Maintenance and Care

Sewer Maintenance and Care

Maintaining your sewer line is crucial to preventing backups, clogs, and costly repairs. With proper care and attention, you can ensure that your system runs smoothly and efficiently.

How to Maintain Your Sewer Line:

Regular Inspections and Care:

Regular inspections of your sewer line can help identify potential issues before they become major problems. Consider hiring a professional plumber every few years to inspect your sewer line, especially if you live in an older home with aging pipes.

A sump pump connected to the sewer system is considered an illegal connection and may be subject to penalties. If your sump pump is connected to the sewer line, please notify our office immediately for further investigation and to ensure proper discharge.

What to Avoid Flushing:

Be mindful of what goes down the drain or toilet. The only things that should go down the toilet are **toilet paper** and **human waste**.

Flushing or pouring non-biodegradable items can cause serious blockages in the sewer line. Common items to avoid flushing include:

- **Baby Wipes** (even if labeled "flushable")
- **Paper Towels or Napkins**
- **Feminine Hygiene Products, diapers**
- **Grease, Oil, or Fat** (can solidify and clog pipes)
- **Dental Floss or Cotton Swabs**
- **Chemicals or Cleaning Products** (can harm the environment and plumbing)

How to Address Backups and Clogs:

If you experience a sewer backup or slow drainage:

- **Don't Flush More Water:** If you suspect a backup, avoid flushing toilets or running water until the issue is addressed.
- **Check for Visible Blockages:** Sometimes, a blockage may be visible at the point of entry (like a clogged toilet or sink). Clear the obstruction if possible.
- **Call a Professional:** For more serious clogs or backups, it's essential to contact a plumber. They can perform a thorough inspection and clear any blockages using specialized tools (e.g., drain snakes, hydro-jetting).
- **Know When to Contact the Sewer Department:** If the issue seems to be with the public sewer line (e.g., a major blockage in the street), contact the **Medfield Sewer Department** at **508-906-3003** to report the issue.

Emergency Procedures and Contact Information

In Case of a Leak or Issue:

- **During Regular Business Hours:**

If you suspect a leak or need to report an issue with your water or sewer service, call the **Water/Sewer Office** at **508-906-3003**.

The office is available to assist you with any non-emergency concerns during business hours.

- **After Hours (Overnight or Weekends):**

For emergencies that arise outside of regular business hours, contact the Public Safety Building at 508-359-2315. They handle non-emergency situations after hours and will coordinate the response accordingly.

Sewer and Water Emergencies:

- **Sewer Backup:**

If you experience a sewer backup inside your home (e.g., toilets or drains backing up), it's important to act quickly. In most cases, you will need to call a licensed plumber to address the issue in your home's sewer lines.

However, if the issue seems to be in the public sewer line (outside your home), call the Water/Sewer Office or the Public Safety Building to report the problem.

- **Water Emergencies:**

If you have a water leak or experience a water-related emergency (e.g., a burst pipe or loss of water pressure), follow the steps below:

- **Shut off the water supply** to your home immediately to prevent further damage.
- **Contact a professional** plumber if the issue is inside your property.
- For issues involving the water main or infrastructure (e.g., broken pipes outside your property), call the Water/Sewer Office or the Public Safety Building to report the emergency.

When to Call a Professional:

If you are unsure whether the issue is your responsibility or the town's, or if you need assistance addressing any issue that involves plumbing or infrastructure repairs within your home, it is always best to call a licensed professional plumber. They can provide a thorough assessment and help resolve the issue.

Understanding and maintaining your water and sewer systems is essential for preventing costly repairs, conserving water, and ensuring the long-term efficiency of your home's utilities. By staying proactive, monitoring your usage, and addressing issues early, you can avoid unexpected expenses and help protect this valuable resource for the future.

Important Contact Information & Resources:

- **Water/Sewer Office:** For routine inquiries, meter readings, and service requests—**508-906-3003** (during business hours).
- **Public Safety Building:** For emergencies after hours, including overnight and weekends—**508-359-2315**.
- **Customer Portal:** Access to monitor your water usage and detect potential leaks early.

By staying informed and utilizing the resources available to you, you can keep your water and sewer systems running smoothly while also conserving water and protecting your property.

*Thank you for being a responsible and informed
member of the Medfield community!*