CITY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
BUREAU OF SANITATION
SEWER SERVICE CHARGE INFORMATION

FMD
SSC
BOS Services
Adjustments Commercial
LAMC 64.41 Low income
Residential Sub Meter
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General

The Sewer Service Charge (SSC) is applied to metered water use to obtain money for constructing and maintaining sewers and sewage treatment plants, and for treating sewage which is discharged into the sewer system. **This fact sheet answers the most frequently asked questions about the charge. However, because we have tried to simplify explanations, some details may not be fully explained. The officially adopted ordinances, rules, and regulations will rule in case of any conflicts.** Refer to Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) Section 64.41, as modified or to the actual LAMC code citing.

Basic Rate

The City's basic SSC rate (ordinance 176462) is $10.13 per hcf (hundred cubic feet) of discharged sewage at "domestic strength" for all customers of the City of Los Angeles wastewater system. The details that follow are the authorized means by which the volume of sewage discharged may be determined or estimated.

Estimation of Sewage Volume

As of July 1, 1997, (ordinance 171,531), the method used to determine sewage volumes for properties defined as “residential” has been changed and differs greatly from that used on other premises. Definitions of premises for SSC purposes are as follows:

“Residential” premises: When one water meter serves four or fewer dwelling units. This includes mobile home parks.

“Multiple dwelling” premises: When one meter serves five or more dwelling units. These properties are billed in the same way as commercial properties.

“Commercial” premises: All properties not included in one of the previous categories including stores, office buildings, restaurants, manufacturing plants, and office buildings.

Customers with no approved private water sub-meters will have their sewage volume estimated.

Residential Customers

Estimates of sewage volumes for residential customers are based on the method called “Winter Water Use” (**WWU**). Winter water usage generally indicates sewer usage because it tends to be for internal use, and is more likely to go to the sewer system. Normally, rain, lower temperatures, and other conditions allow you to greatly reduce irrigation and other outside water uses during the winter months.

Annually, your average daily sewage volume is calculated for the upcoming year, from July 1 through June 30, based on the **lowest average daily sewage volume** during the **previous winter.** The sewage volume is determined by evaluating the water usage for the premises during the Rainy Season Review Period (**RSRP**).

The RSRP changes each year, but generally begins in October or November and ends in April or May. For **2026/2027**, the **RSRP** is **October 13, 2025** to **March 23, 2026**. After the average daily usage has been calculated, the SSC billed is more or less constant throughout the year, changing only slightly due to the number of days in each billing period. **The SSC is not tied to the water consumption during each billing period.**

Dry winters may cause a customer's WWU to still include irrigation water. Therefore, a "Dry Winter Compensation Factor" (**DWCF**) is applied to the WWU amount, which may reduce the estimated sewage volume. The reduction due to the DWCF is **usually** greater for dry winters than more wet ones to allow us to reduce your estimated sewage volume. The DWCF is a number equaling 1.0 or less (usually about 0.9) selected after a study of the rainfall, pattern of rainfall and total water consumption that occurred during the previous rainy season. This study is also used to determine the RSRP. **This years DWCF is 0.80.**

Calculation of SSC: The steps for calculating the SSC are:

1. Determine the lowest average daily WWU by dividing the amount of water used in hcf during the lowest winter billing period by the number of days: **WWU = hcf / days**
2. Determine the Average Daily Sewer Volume (**ADSV**) by multiplying the WWU by the DWCF: **ADSV = WWU x DWCF**
3. Multiply the ADSV by the number of billing days in each cycle
   Sewage volume = ADSV x # billing days
4. Multiply the sewage volume by the base SSC rate:
   SSC = Sewage volume x $10.13

These steps can be simplified into the following formula:

SSC = ADSV x number of days in the billing cycle x $10.13 (base rate)

In the above formula, the only variable is the number of billing days. The ADSV remains constant for the **fiscal** year from July 1 to June 30.

The following is an example, using the 2023/2024 winter review period as a base for calculating SSC for the November 14, 2022 through April 11, 2023, period. Each year, the review period changes, but usually begins in October or November, and ends in April or May. The DWCF also fluctuates, depending on rainfall and other conditions.

Rainy Season Review Period (RSRP) = Nov 14, 2022 – Apr 11, 2023

Dry Winter Compensation Factor (DWCF) = 0.97

Read Date	Days	Consumption	Average per Day
03/29/23 – 05/28/23	60	98	
01/29/23 – 03/29/23	59	40	0.678
11/25/22 – 01/29/23	65	42	0.646
09/25/22 – 11/25/22	61	85	1.393

07/29/22 – 09/25/22	58	138
05/24/22 – 07/29/22	66	110

Read dates are based on the account billing cycle. (The RSRP & DWCF values will vary each fiscal year.)

WINTER WATER USE (WWU CALCULATIONS

[Residential premises only (4 units or less per DWP meter)]

NOTE: Although the above example gives water usage for billing cycles outside the review period, only the lowest average daily usage during a billing period which lies entirely within the rainy season is used. For the example above, there are two periods that are in the rainy season review period. The period of November 25, 2022 through January 29, 2023 yields the lowest average daily water use. So,

For this example, using the formula: **SSC = ADSV x (number of billing days) x $10.13**

- Daily WWU = 42 hcf ÷ 65 days = 0.64615 hcf per day
- ADSV = 0.64615 x 0.78 = 0.50400 hcf per day
- Sewage volume = 0.50400 x 60* = 30 hcf (30.24000)
  (May vary from 54-69 days)
- **SSC = 30.24000 x $10.13 = **$306.33** (bill for 60 days in this example)

A customer's average SSC may vary from year to year, depending on the variation in winter water usage. However, when the sewage volume is set for the period July 1 through June 30 of the next year, the SSC bill will be almost constant each billing period. Again, because the SSC is based on the lowest daily average, the amount on each bill will vary slightly, depending on the number of billing days in each billing period. Another sample bill is available at sanitation.lacity.gov/ssc.

Defaulted rates

The DWP computer defaults to a minimum ADSV of 0.06667 hcf/day, which is four (4) hcf in 60 days. In some cases, this value can be reduced if the customer shows a sustained usage of less than 4 hcf. For new and other customers who do not have water usage in the past winter review period, the customer's SSC will be set to the defaulted rate of the City median usage, depending on applicable circumstances.

Low-Income Customers (Low Income Surcharge)

On July 1, 1997, the City implemented a 31 percent discount on the SSC for the first 18 hcf of water, for each two-month billing period, for low-income customers. Charges to all other customers are surcharged by 0.65 percent to offset this discount as required by state and federal regulations since January 1, 1991. The discount program applies only to single family dwellings. It is not feasible to extend it to Duplexes, Triplexes, Quadruplexes, and multiple dwellings.

Residential Adjustments

Residential customers seeking adjustments must submit detailed data. For example, if an event during the rainy season distorts a customer's ADSV, the customer may qualify for an adjustment if the request is received within one year of the event. Examples of such events include a plumbing leak, planting of new landscaping, or the total filling or refilling of a swimming pool. However, the ADSV will not be adjusted when such

an event occurs outside the winter review period, unless it can be verified that it materially affected the winter ADSV. No correction is available for changes in occupancy. A second water meter serving only irrigation may also be adjusted to eliminate sewer charges. Note that this is a different and more expensive installation option than the private water sub-meter referred to below.

Commercial and Multiple Dwelling Customers

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Studies have indicated that the average commercial and multiple dwelling customer discharges 92 percent of delivered water to the sewer over the period of a year. Thus, these customers' sewage volumes are estimated by multiplying 0.92 x total purchased water for each billing period.

Adjustments in the volume of sewage discharge are available for customers who discharge 93 percent or less of their delivered water to the sewer. Reduced discharge may result from water incorporated in a product, irrigation of extensive landscaped areas, evaporation in cooling towers and boilers, washing of a product, water conveyed offsite, etc.

Sewage of Strength Higher or Lower than Domestic

Industrial and certain commercial dischargers (primarily restaurants) whose waste discharge exceeds domestic strength pay a "quality surcharge fee" (QSF) in addition to their SSC. Those whose waste is below domestic strength (usually because of cooling water discharge) may qualify for a reduced SSC rate in combination with a "zero-based QSF." The "Guide to Discharging Industrial Waste" is available at https://sanitation.lacity.gov/documents/guide-discharging-industrial-wastewater-sewer-1998.

Vacant Premises

If the premises are unoccupied throughout a billing period, the customer's sewage volume will be reduced to 15 percent of the SSC billed. No correction is available for increases or decreases in occupancy. **A written application for adjustment is required** within one year of the end of the billing period during which the property was vacant.

Private Metering of Sewage

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Accurate measurement and metering of sewage is economical only for large industrial and commercial dischargers with continuous flow. Plans for any proposed sewage meter installation **must** be approved by Bureau of Sanitation and then a plumbing permit obtained from the Department of Building & Safety.

Private Sub-metering of Water

Although precision metering of sewage may not be economical or practical for most customers, estimated sewage volume may be calculated by installation of a private water sub-meter. Owners of single family dwellings may do the work themselves; otherwise, the services of a licensed plumber are required. Additional Residential & Commercial literature explaining the details, meter costs and an installation summary is available. **This literature should be carefully studied and feel free to call before proceeding.**

Basically, under this procedure, it is necessary to:

1. **Obtain a plumbing permit to install a sub-meter from the Department of Building and Safety (DBS).**
2. **Segregate the water system plumbing which serves interior uses tributary to the sewer from that serving irrigation or other uses not tributary to the sewer.**
3. **Purchase the sub-meter from the Department of Water and Power (DWP)** and install it either on the water line serving the non-tributary uses or the tributary uses. **NOTE: meters bought from other sources will not be read for billing.**
4. **Have DBS inspect the installation.**

Ask DBS on the contractor & installation requirements because additional costs may be charged for multiple site visits for inspection. Literature explaining the procedure in detail is available upon request. This literature should be carefully studied before proceeding. **Only one (1) sub-meter is allowed per DWP water meter**. After installation, the customer is billed SSC only for water tributary to the sewer. The LAMC §64.41.07(b) does not provide for an adjustment on previous charges because the meter is only measuring what is currently being used. **Installation of a sub-meter does not always result in a lower SSC.**

Properties within a Los Angeles County Sanitation District

Properties whose sewage enters a City sewer but is treated by County Sanitation District treatment facilities pay an SSC at a reduced rate of $2.51 per HCF. This situation occurs in portions of the Watts, Harbor Gateway, Harbor City communities, northerly and westerly San Pedro and some areas adjoining the City of Inglewood. Also refer to the SSC exemption section below.

Customers who believe that they may qualify should review their property tax bill or information statement under Direct Assessments to see if something like "**Sanitation #x (323) 685-5217 $xx.00**" appears and the DWP bill shows the full SSC rate of **$10.13/HCF**. If so, both residential and commercial customers may submit a written request for further investigation and processing.

The reduced rate is applicable to all your past SSC overcharges at this location. Credit for any past paid SSC will be applied to your open DWP accounts or refunded at DWP's discretion.

SSC Exemptions

Residential and commercial properties not connected to a City sewer system qualify for exemption from the SSC and a refund of all SSC which the customer has paid. Such properties are totally served by septic tank and/or cesspool, or are **entirely undeveloped** and have water service for irrigation only or may be connected to a County or other cities' sewer system.

Additional Information

Additional information about the SSC may be obtained on the internet at sanitation.lacity.gov/ssc by calling the Customer Care Center at 1 **(800) 773-2489** or by writing to the Bureau **of Sanitation, Residential SSC, PO Box 79083, Los Angeles, CA 90079-79083 or Commercial SSC, PO Box 79112, Los Angeles, CA 90079-0112**