

# Understanding Your Utility Bill

## Page 1 - Bill Summary, Messages & Pay Stub



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**Section A:** page number, total pages of the bill, and customer account number

**Section B:** 2-D bar code used by the bill printing software and mail service to ensure accuracy in sorting and delivery

**Section C:** messages that may be specific to the customer or general messages intended for all customers or customers within a customer category

**Section D:** summary of the current month's bill, including the previous month's balance and any payments, credits, adjustments, penalties, etc. Section D also includes the current month's charges for each utility on the account and other monthly charges, such as fees for trash collection, storm water and private area lighting.

**Section E:** bill pay stub to be returned with the customer's payment if paying by mail or in person.

**Section F:** address for the City's website

Page 1 of 4 Account No: 1212124444

**CITY OF HAMILTON UTILITIES**  
345 HIGH STREET  
HAMILTON, OH 45011

**Joe Customer**  
1234 Home Street  
Hamilton, OH 45011

**SERVICE ADDRESS:** 1234 Home Street\*\*  
**ACCOUNT NUMBER:** 1212124444  
**BILLING DATE:** 10-01-2013  
**AMOUNT DUE:** \$264.60  
**PAYMENT DUE DATE:** 10-21-2013

**Customer Service**  
Telephone: (513) 785-7100  
In Person: Government Services Building  
345 High St, 1st Floor,  
Hamilton, Ohio  
On-Line: [www.hamilton-city.org](http://www.hamilton-city.org)

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BILL SUMMARY		MESSAGES	
Previous Account Balance	\$ 225.00	This section contains random messages are sent to all or some of the customers.	
Payments Received (credit)	\$(225.00)		
Adjustments/Fees/Deposits	\$ 0		
Penalties	\$ 0		
Past Due/Credit Amount	\$ 0		
All Service Charges		Different messages may be sent to residential and commercial customers in a given billing cycle.	
Electric *	\$100.00		
Gas *	\$ 50.00		
Water *	\$ 25.00		
Sewer *	\$ 45.00		
Stormwater *	\$ 3.60		
Trash *	\$ 14.50		
Private Area Light *	\$ 26.50		
Other *	\$ 0		
Total Current Charges	\$264.60		
<b>New Account Balance</b>	<b>\$264.60</b>		

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WHEN PAYING BY MAIL, PLEASE DETACH THIS PORTION OF BILL AND RETURN WITH YOUR PAYMENT. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: CITY OF HAMILTON

Paying by Credit Card? Check Card Type:	VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MC <input type="checkbox"/>	Total Current Charges <b>\$264.60</b>	Past Due/Credit Amount <b>\$0.00</b>	Payment Due Date <b>10/21/2013</b>	Total Amount Now Due <b>\$264.60</b>
Credit Card Number	My donation to the "Make It Happen" Fund to help needy families is: \$		After This Date <b>10/21/2013</b>	Late Amount Due <b>\$277.83</b>	
Signature	Card Expiration Date				Total Payment Enclosed

**Save postage with EZ Pay...**  
EZ Pay Payment Code: 12121224444  
PAY ONLINE at [www.hamilton-city.org](http://www.hamilton-city.org)  
PAY BY PHONE at 1-800-430-1623  
Mail Payments to: **City of Hamilton, Ohio**  
PO Box 5003  
Hamilton, OH 45012

**JOE CUSTOMER**  
**ACCOUNT NUMBER: 1212124444**

CITY OF HAMILTON UTILITIES, 345 High Street, Hamilton, OH 45011, (513) 785-7100

Visit us at [www.hamilton-city.org](http://www.hamilton-city.org)

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# Understanding Your Utility Bill

## Page 2 - General Information & Explanations



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**Section G:** information for what customers should do if they suspect a natural gas leak

**Section H:** explanation of language and terms found on the utility bill, such as item titles, technical terms and other valuable information for utility customers

**Section I:** contact information for various agencies in the community that can assist customers in need with their utility payments, as well as contact information for who customers should contact if they have questions about their bill, feel their bill is incorrect, or would like to appeal charges on their bill. Section I also contains information on the penalty and delinquency policies of the City, due to late payments and arrearages.

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**GAS LEAK WARNING! IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THE SIGNS BELOW, WALK AWAY AND TAKE ACTION**

**SMELL:** To help you smell a leak from natural gas, an odorant called mercaptan is added to the gas. Mercaptan makes natural gas smell similar to rotten eggs.  
**SIGHT:** If you see blowing dirt, bubbling water or an unusual area of dead vegetation where your gas lines are located, you may be seeing a gas leak.  
**SOUND:** If you hear a hissing sound near a pipeline, you may be hearing a gas leak.  
**IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THE SIGNS ABOVE, LEAVE THE AREA IMMEDIATELY!**  
**DO NOT** try to fix or locate the leak yourself!  
**DO NOT** turn any lights or electrical or electronic equipment on OR off!  
**DO NOT** use your home telephone or a cell phone in the area of a potential leak!  
**LEAVE THE AREA, THEN CALL 911 AND/OR (513) 785-7550 FROM A CELL PHONE OR NEIGHBOR'S TELEPHONE!**



**EXPLANATION OF BILL LANGUAGE** (The following terms will not necessarily appear on every bill.)

Account Number	Unique number for identifying a customer account. May be based upon location, type of use, etc.	Meter Multiplier	A factor that the meter reading usage and demand is multiplied by in order to obtain the correct energy usage and demand measurement.
Adjustments/Fees	Any miscellaneous credits, adjustments or fees applied to the account during the previous month.	Minimum Charge	Water and Sewer customers are subject to a minimum monthly charge. For Water, this charge is set by Ordinance. For Sewer, this charge equals the Sewer Usage Charge for two Ccf of sewage PLUS the Basic Billing Charge.
Applicable Rider Charges	Total of all utility riders, not otherwise specified, that are due in the current bill. To review the various applicable rider charges for each utility, go to the City's website, at <a href="http://www.hamilton-city.org">www.hamilton-city.org</a> .	Monthly Service Charge	Same as the Customer Charge for Electric or Gas. Water does not have a Monthly Service Charge, but has a monthly minimum charge for usage less than 3 Ccf. Sewer has a Basic Billing Charge, which is similar to a Monthly Service Charge; however, Sewer also has a monthly minimum charge equal to the Basic Billing Charge PLUS the usage charge on 2 Ccf.
Basic Billing Charge	Term used with Sewer Charges to denote the basic customer charge on the sewer portion of the bill.	New Account Balance	Amount equal to the Total Current Charges PLUS Past Due Amounts, PLUS/MINUS any Payments, Refunds, and/or Adjustments.
Billing Date	Date that the bill was created.	Past Due/Credit Amount	Amount that is either overdue (Past Due) from previous billings, including penalties, or an amount that has been overpaid by the customer (Credits).
Budget Bill Amount To Pay	Amount that is due, on a monthly, basis for budget bill customers. This amount is the same throughout the year, except for the month in which the budget bill amount is traced up.	Payment Arrangement	Special, formal agreement between the City and a utility customer that is in arrears on their account.
Budget Bill True Up	Running total amount the budget bill is above or below the actual charges incurred. This amount is reconciled annually.	Payment Due Date	Date the bill is due. After this date, late fees shall accrue. This date is 21 days after the billing date.
Ccf	Usage measurement for gas, water and sewer. Denotes "hundred cubic feet."	Payments Received	Amount that has been received from the customer since the last billing.
Customer Charge	The fixed, monthly basic charge for electric and gas service. Water does not have a Customer Charge. The Customer Charge for Sewer is known as the Basic Billing Charge.	Previous Account Balance	Amount that was still unpaid as of the creation of the Current Bill.
Deposit Refund	Amount of any deposits that have been refunded.	Service Charges	Current charges due for various utilities and other services provided by the City (e.g., private area lighting, storm water, trash collection).
Energy Charge	Per kWh charge in electric, to pay for the City's costs of delivering energy. In essence, the charge is for the use of local wires, transformers, substations, and other equipment used to deliver electricity to the customer's home or business.	Total Amount Now Due	The amount that is currently due on an account. This will include current as well as past due charges.
Gas Cost Recovery Charge	The Gas Cost Recovery (GCR) Charge is the cost (per Ccf) of gas the City purchases from its suppliers. This Charge includes a fixed, base rate of \$0.350 per Ccf PLUS a variable rate, that changes over time, depending upon the price of gas that the City pays its suppliers.	Total Current Charges	Current month's billing due for various utilities and other services provided by the City (e.g., private area lighting, storm water, trash collection).
kWh	Usage measurement for electric. Denotes "kilowatt-hours."	Usage	Amount of electricity, gas or water used during the billing period. Unless metered separately, sewer usage is based upon water usage.
Late Amount Due	The amount due from the customer for a bill that is not paid by the due date.	Usage Charge	Per Ccf gas, water and sewer charges, used to recover various costs associated with utility operations.
Late Payment Charge	A 5% late charge on the current bill and 1% late charge on the Past Due Amount of a customer's bill is assessed, if payment in full is not received by the Payment Due Date.		



Contact any of the following agencies to see if you qualify for assistance:

**Supports to Encourage Low Income Families (SELF) or E-HEAP** - (513) 868-9300  
**Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)** - 1-800-282-0880  
**Mercy Franciscan @ St. Raphael** — (513) 603-8200  
**The Salvation Army** — (513) 863-1445



For more information about utility rates, visit us at [www.hamilton-city.org](http://www.hamilton-city.org).

**Service/Billing Inquiries** –Direct questions regarding your utility services or bill payment arrangements to the Customer Service Division, at (513) 785-7100. You have the right to file an Appeal for Service/Billing Issues, which are unrelated to your ability to make the required minimum payment by the due date (i.e., billing errors or policy issues). Call the Appeals Hotline, at (513) 785-7117, before your due date and you will be contacted as to the process for filing an appeal.

**Penalty for Delinquent Utility Bill**—A penalty of 5% shall be imposed on the current unpaid balance due for any City public utility service not paid by the due date. Additionally, a penalty of 1% per month shall accrue on such unpaid arrearage, commencing on the next due date (or what should be the next due date, if service is terminated) for the customer's next utility bill. Said penalty shall continue to accrue on such unpaid arrearage on all future due dates thereafter, until the unpaid arrearage is paid in full.

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# Understanding Your Utility Bill

## Page 3 - Customer Utility Accounts



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Page 3 (and beyond) contains information on each of the customer's utility accounts by providing an explanation and historical review of each of the utility services. Bills for accounts with multiple utility services, multiple locations, etc., may be longer than 3 pages.

**Section J:** meter read date, period of the latest meter reading, number of days in the period, and date of the next scheduled meter reading

**Section K:** information related to every electric, gas, and water meter on the utility account(s). Section K includes usage data, as well as details of the various charges associated with that usage, to generate the total charge for that utility. Commercial/general service electric customers will also receive additional information on demand and other pertinent data.

**Section L:** graphs showing the last 13 months of usage for the electric, gas and water meters. This information shows overall and seasonal usage trends, while providing a visual explanation as to why a customer's bill may have gone up or down.

**Section M:** sanitary sewer charges based upon usage on an associated water meter. Sewer usage is the same as the water meter reading; therefore, no information is provided on a previous or current reading.

Page 3 of 4 Account No: 1212124444

**EXPLANATION AND HISTORICAL REVIEW OF UTILITY ACCOUNT**

**SERVICE ADDRESS: 1234 HOME STREET\*\***

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**Meter Read Date:** 10/1/2013  
**Meter Read Period:** 9/2/2013—10/1/2013 J  
**Days in Read Period:** 30  
**Next Scheduled Meter Read Date:** 11/1/2013

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<p><b>Electric Charges:</b> <span style="float: right; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 5px;">K</span></p> <p>Meter Serial Number 123456789          Rate Code RS          Usage (Total kWh) 900              Previous Reading 123,456              Current Reading 124,356</p> <p>Customer Charge \$ 4.44          Minimum Charge * \$ 0.00          Energy Charge \$ 79.00          Applicable Rider Charges \$ 12.03          Ohio Kilowatt Hour Tax \$ 4.53  <b>Total Electric Charge \$100.00</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Electric Usage (kWh)</b> <span style="float: right; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 5px;">L</span></p>
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<p><b>Gas Charges:</b> <span style="float: right; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 5px;">K</span></p> <p>Meter Serial Number 987654321          Rate Code GR          Usage (Total Ccf) 30              Previous Reading 45,678              Current Reading 45,708</p> <p>Customer Charge \$ 7.00          Usage Charges \$ 30.55          Gas Cost Recovery Charge \$ 10.50          Applicable Rider Charges \$ 1.95  <b>Total Gas Charge \$ 50.00</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Gas Usage (Ccf)</b> <span style="float: right; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 5px;">L</span></p>
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<p><b>Water Charges:</b> <span style="float: right; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 5px;">K</span></p> <p>Meter Serial Number 123987654          Rate Code W          Usage (Total Ccf) 10              Previous Reading 45,678              Current Reading 45,688</p> <p>Minimum Charge * \$ 0.00          Usage Charges \$ 24.25          Applicable Rider Charges \$ 0.75  <b>Total Water Charge \$ 25.00</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Water Usage (Ccf)</b> <span style="float: right; border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px 5px;">L</span></p>
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**Sewer Charges:**

<p><b>Rate Code</b> W          Usage (Total Ccf — based on Water) 10          Basic Billing Charge \$ 3.08          Minimum Charge * \$ 0.00          Usage Charges \$ 33.12          Applicable Rider Charges \$ 8.80  <b>Total Sewer Charge \$ 45.00</b></p>	<span style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 50%; padding: 10px 15px; font-size: 24px;">M</span>
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