

DETROIT WATER AND SEWERAGE DEPARTMENT

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Key Contacts

24 Hour Emergency Number:
(313) 267-7401

Customer Service:
(313) 267-8000

Working around the clock to provide excellence in water and sewer service!

The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department wants you to know your tap water meets or surpasses all federal and state standards for quality and safety.

- One of the largest systems in the nation, the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department has a rich history in public utility service dating back to the early 1800s - beginning with a water system of wooden logs and the “Grand Sewer” made up of brick and stone.
- DWSD provides water service to the entire city of Detroit and neighboring southeastern Michigan communities throughout Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, St. Clair, Lapeer, Genesee, Washtenaw and Monroe counties. The 1,079-square-mile water service area, which includes Detroit and 126 suburban communities. Wastewater service is also provided to a 946-square-mile area that encompasses Detroit and 76 neighboring communities.
- The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department is a branch of the City of Detroit government. The Department is governed by a seven-member Board of Water Commissioners whose members are appointed by the Mayor. Four commissioners, by City Charter requirements, represent Detroit residents. Three remaining commissioners represent suburban wholesale customers with appointees from Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. Board meeting times and locations are posted on the Department’s Web site at www.dwsd.org. Click on the About DWSD button for the DWSD Board of Water Commissioners Meeting Calendar.
- DWSD’s water supply system is one of the largest in the nation both in terms of water produced and population served. The water system draws fresh water from the Great Lakes System, with Lake Huron to the north and the Detroit River to the south. Hardness levels for treated drinking water vary depending on the time of the year, averaging 100 parts per million or 6-6.5 grains per gallon. DWSD’s water network consists of 3,438 miles of transmission and distribution mains within the City of Detroit, and 402 miles of transmission mains in the remaining service area. DWSD’s five water treatment plants pump an average of 596 million gallons of clean drinking water each day. The Department is responsible for maintenance and repair of 27,244 fire hydrants in the city.
- DWSD’s sewer system originated in 1836, and today consists of 10 pump stations, five combined sewer overflow retention treatment basins, three screening and disinfection facilities and a total of 3,433 miles of sewer lines that carry rainwater and wastewater to the Wastewater Treatment Plant – one of the largest single-site wastewater treatment facilities in the country. This facility treats an average of 707 million gallons of flow per day.
- The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, with 2,100 employees, has the sixth lowest combined water and sewerage rates per month among the 20 most populated cities in the United States. By law, DWSD can only recover the cost for provision of service – it cannot make a profit. For the Fiscal Year (FY) 2011/2012 the Department has an annual operating budget of approximately \$390,379,089 million.



- By Michigan statute, DWSD is a not-for-profit entity. Water and sewer rates are based on cost of service only and the Department receives no subsidies from property taxes.
- Based on the rates adopted for Fiscal Year 2011/2012, in July 2011 DWSD began billing customers in the city of Detroit an average of \$75.11 per month based on water usage of 1,000 cubic feet per month. This covers all costs of providing safe drinking water and sewer service to their homes, including the cost of water and wastewater treatment, pumping, delivery, billing, and more.
- Suburban customers receive the same high quality drinking water and wastewater treatment provided to Detroit customers. However, their municipalities operate additional facilities to bring these services to their homes, so DWSD's current charges of \$30.66 per month for the average suburban customer, represent only a portion of the final bill for residents outside the city.
- DWSD's July 2011 Capital Improvement Program totals approximately \$1.3 billion over the next five years with approximately \$216.50 million budgeted for water and sewer projects for FY 2011-12. The program focuses on maintaining the excellent quality of water provided to customers; improving water system reliability by replacing aging infrastructure to reduce the growing incidence of main breaks; ensuring environmental protection for all customers through upgraded treatment facilities; improving employee safety through system modifications; and increasing efficiency of services to all customers by taking advantage of new technology.
- Major projects in the Capital Improvement Program include replacement of aging water mains in Detroit; water meter replacement and automatic water reading equipment installation; rehabilitation and upgrades to water and wastewater treatment plants, pumping stations and reservoirs; rehabilitation or replacement of sewer lines and outfalls; construction of combined sewer overflow control facilities to ensure that sewer systems effectively handle storm water flows and protect the environment.
- The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department is proud of the high quality of drinking water it provides throughout the Detroit region. Specifics about this notable drinking water and the process used to ensure its safety for all customers can be found in DWSD's *Water Quality Report* which is issued annually and is available from DWSD's **Water Quality Division, at 313/926-8102, or on the Department's Web site at www.dwsd.org. Click on the Customer Info button.**
- The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department views community awareness about water and sewer related issues as highly important. The Department hosts a number of annual events including Drinking Water Month in May with related events throughout the month. The Department encourages opportunities to bring water quality and wastewater issues of importance to area community groups and students. For information contact – Public Affairs Customer Outreach Section at **313/964-9576**.

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