

The City of Mount Vernon: Wastewater Utility



Frequently Asked Questions

What is wastewater?

Wastewater is water that has been affected by domestic, industrial, and commercial use. Domestic wastewater originates from activities such as restroom usage, bathing, food preparation and laundry. Commercial wastewater originates from non-domestic sources, such as beauty salons or auto body repair shops. Industrial wastewater originates from industrial or commercial manufacturing processes.

Why do we need to treat our wastewater?

Treating wastewater is a form of pollution control. Improperly treated wastewater can spread diseases and release nutrients, oil, and grease into the river that are harmful to people and wildlife, as well as contaminate our drinking water.

What materials can the wastewater plant treat for?

Preliminary treatment: trash, sticks, leaves and other large debris

Primary Treatment: grease, oils, fats, and floatable and settleable solids

Secondary treatment: biological contents such as human waste, food waste, soaps, detergents, and sugars

Final treatment: Chlorination and dechlorination are all used to destroy harmful viruses, bacteria and hazardous microorganisms before the water is released back into the environment

How is my wastewater use calculated each month?

The Water/Wastewater department uses a water meter to determine water use and wastewater output.

What is the proposed rate increase?

The proposed increase is 15% each of the next three years. The proposed changes would result in a \$0.74 per 100 cubic foot increase per month for the remainder of 2021, \$0.84 in 2022 (15%), and \$0.97 in 2023 (15%). The typical Mount Vernon household uses between 300 to 600 cubic feet per month.

Why is a rate increase needed?

The wastewater treatment plant is deteriorating rapidly. It has been operating 24/7 since the 1980's. Rate increases are needed to cover costs to refurbish the two digesters as well as upgrades to accommodate phosphorus removal mandated by the Ohio EPA. Phosphorus removal will increase plant operating costs because of the purchase of additional chemicals and the need to dispose of additional waste sludge generated by the process. There is also a need for repairs and maintenance on the Collections system which includes lift stations, manholes, and main lines.

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Who is the regulatory body for wastewater treatment?

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency regulates the treatment and discharge of wastewater in the State of Ohio. Ohio EPA can issue fines and pursue legal action if mandates are not followed.

The Stormwater Utility was just added last year, can we use those fees to support the wastewater plant?

The water system, wastewater system, and stormwater system are all financially independent.

What are the major repairs and updates that the wastewater plant is in desperate need of?

The majority of funds collected from the wastewater utility rate increase would be used to fund the rehabilitation of the plant's digesters and the purchase of chemicals to remove phosphorus during the treatment process. The digesters are on the verge of permanent breakdown, and the City has been mandated by the Ohio EPA to remove phosphorus during treatment.

Do my city taxes contribute to the wastewater department?

No. The only funds supporting the wastewater treatment plant are the wastewater usage fees collected from citizens who are connected to the city sewer system. This is why a rate increase is necessary in order to keep the plant running efficiently and safely.

What projects will my wastewater utility fees help to support in 2021?

- 4 blocks of sanitary sewer at Oak St. & S. Catherine St.*
- Clinton Rd Sanitary replacement & pump station upgrades (EPA Mandated)*
- Start of rehabilitation of Wastewater Treatment Plant Digesters*
- Line Extensions and Improvements*

How can I get assistance on my bill?

The following agencies may be able to provide short term assistance:

- Salvation Army 740-392-8716*
- Interchurch Social Services of Knox County 740-397-4825*
- Knox County Department of Job and Family Services 844-640-6446*
- Kno-Ho-Co-Ashland Community Action Commission 740-397-0378*

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What are other users paying for their Wastewater in Nearby towns?

Nearby Towns	Minimum Wastewater Fee	Wastewater Usage Fees if Exceed Minimum	3000 gallon user monthly fee
Danville*	\$19.50 minimum + \$25.00 wastewater improvement fee = \$44.50 wastewater fee for up to 2000 gallons of water and wastewater used (billed together)	Minimum fee + \$6.00 per additional 1,000 gallons	\$50.50
Fredericktown	\$30.77 minimum for first 1500 gallons of wastewater used	Minimum fee + \$8.91 for every 500 gallons over minimum	\$57.50
Centerburg (based on a $\frac{5}{8}$ meter)	\$15.00 minimum Inside village fee + \$22.57 = \$37.57 for first 1000 gallons of wastewater used	Minimum fee + \$22.81 per 1000 gallons over minimum	\$83.19
Mount Vernon	\$4.90 fee per 100 cubic with minimum of 400 cubic feet (2,992.2 gallons) of wastewater used	\$19.60 minimum fee + \$4.90 for each 100 cubic feet over minimum	\$19.60