



# WATER NEWS

## TCEQ Fee Approved by Council for 2010

### New Line Item to Cover State-Imposed Fees

On December 10, San Antonio City Council approved the addition of a new line item to San Antonio Water System monthly bills. The line item covers the cost of increased fees from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), the state's environmental regulatory agency.

"SAWS continues to find ways to reduce spending while always striving to improve services for our customers — a true challenge in today's world," said Robert R. Puente, SAWS President/CEO. "But with fees substantially increased by TCEQ, something that we have no control over, we feel it is important for this cost to be a separate line item on bills so our customers know where their money is going."

During the last several years, TCEQ has received less money in appropriations from the state legislature, prompting the agency to increase its fees imposed on water and wastewater utilities across the state. TCEQ fees to SAWS increased by 335 percent for 2010.

SAWS originally estimated the fees as approximately 27 cents per SAWS water connection and 8 cents per SAWS sewer connection, for a total of 35 cents for customers – including apartment complexes, which typically have one SAWS meter connection. The state, however, considers each unit in an apartment complex a separate connection.

Proposed Pass-Through Fee	Amount
TCEQ Water Fee	<b>\$0.19</b> per customer per month
TCEQ Wastewater Fee	<b>\$0.05</b> per customer per month
<b>Combined effect on bill</b>	<b>\$0.24</b> per customer per month

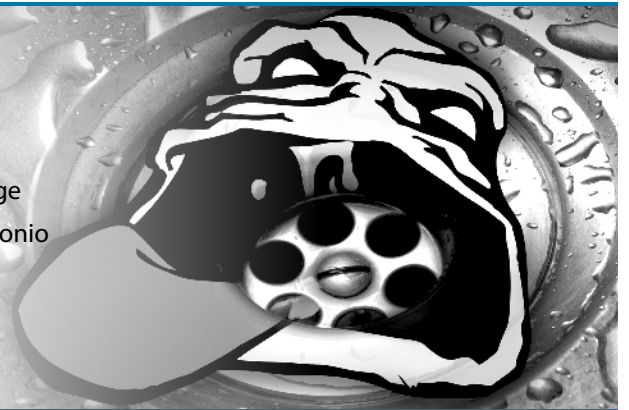
SAWS has developed billing records to assess apartment complexes for each unit, reducing the pass-through fee overall to be 19 cents per SAWS water connection and 5 cents per SAWS sewer connection, for a total of 24 cents for most customers. Apartment complexes will see a higher amount due to the number of connections.

The TCEQ fees will be itemized on customer bills, similar to the storm water fee imposed by the City of San Antonio and the permit fee imposed by the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA). None of these fees are controlled

by SAWS, but appear as line items on the SAWS bill. The EAA fee is also expected to increase in 2010 as a result of current year under-collections, amounting to an additional 48 cents on the monthly bill.



Scrape — don't rinse — greasy dinnerware and cooking vessels. Collect cooled cooking oil and throw it in the trash. Or, take large amounts to the City of San Antonio Household Hazardous Waste Drop-Off Center at 7030 Culebra Road.



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## Protect Those Pipes

### Beware of Old Man Winter

SAWS reminds homeowners to be aware of the dangers of water pipes freezing or bursting in cold temperatures.

"While it rarely gets cold enough to impact pipes in our area, it's important to know the steps you can take to help protect your pipes from freezing or bursting," said Anne Hayden, SAWS Communications Manager. "Investing a little time or money now can prevent costly plumbing repairs from a burst pipe."

Once ice begins to form, it can cause a blockage in the pipe, leading to excessive water pressure. The building pressure has no place to go, ultimately causing the pipe to burst.

Help protect your pipes by:

- Sealing openings where cold air can reach unprotected water pipes. Cold winds can speed up the freezing process.
- Covering pipes with foam or fiberglass insulation sleeves, the thicker the better.
- Leaving cabinet doors open under kitchen and bathroom sinks to allow warmer room air to circulate around pipes.
- Letting faucets drip slowly to keep water flowing through the pipes. Ice might still form, but an open faucet allows water to escape before the pressure builds to where a pipe can burst. If the dripping stops, it may mean that ice is blocking the pipe; keep the faucet open, since the pipe still needs pressure relief.\*

\*(Note: If you choose this option, SAWS will not be able to credit your account for the excess water use.)

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Bead Jamboree

January 9-10  
Live Oak Civic Center  
[www.beadjamboree.com](http://www.beadjamboree.com)

### Snake Farm Day

January 14  
San Antonio  
Children's Museum  
[www.sakids.org](http://www.sakids.org)

### Docent Training

January 16  
Mitchell Lake  
Audubon Center  
10750 Pleasanton Rd.

### A Winter Paws

January 23  
San Antonio  
Botanical Garden  
[www.sabot.org](http://www.sabot.org)

## Your Winter Gardening Questions Answered

### Q. What should I use to cover my plants during a freeze?

A. An old sheet. Simply drape it over the plant and anchor it at the base with rocks.

### Q. Does plastic work as well as cloth?

A. Plastic can be used for freeze protection if a frame holds the material away from the foliage, allowing an insulating layer of air.

### Q. What is the difference between a plant "hardening off" and a plant being "hardy"?

A. Hardening off is a process that happens when plants gradually adapt to harsher conditions such as cold. A hardy plant can withstand freezes and survive.

## The Countdown is On 2010 Census Coming Soon

Come March, the United States Census Bureau will mail more than 600,000 Census forms to households across San Antonio and Bexar County.

Your participation in the 2010 Census ensures that a portion of the \$400 billion in Federal funding will go directly to local community programs, healthcare, schools and infrastructure. Additionally, an accurate count of the population assures political representation at all levels of government.

Expect the 10-question census form to arrive in your mail box the week of March 15, 2010. For more information, visit [www.sanantonio.gov/census](http://www.sanantonio.gov/census).



## CONTACT US

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