

## SAWS Water, Sewer Rates To Remain Steady in 2021

The coronavirus pandemic has taken a toll on many families' finances. But human health and safety, as well as access to affordable water, will remain top priorities for San Antonio Water System in the coming year, as the COVID-19 crisis lingers on.

For the first time in more than a decade, there will be no customer rate increase for water or sewer service in 2021. The SAWS Board of Trustees approved the utility's \$909 million budget during its November meeting.

In addition to keeping water and sewer rates unchanged, the budget allows for continued work on infrastructure improvements communitywide. This includes ongoing efforts to upgrade the city's sewers under an agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Another highlight of the 2021 budget is increased funding for customer payment assistance programs. The SAWS Affordability Discount reduces bills for those who qualify based on their household income.

"This is the one budget I am OK with exceeding each and every year if we can find additional eligible participants," said Doug Evanson, senior vice president & chief financial officer. "Obviously with the impacts of COVID-19, we know there are more people we may be able to help."

Residential water and sewer customers who are having trouble paying their SAWS bill can apply for assistance online at [saws.org/uplift](https://saws.org/uplift). You can also set up a payment plan for any past-due balance at [saws.org/arrangement](https://saws.org/arrangement) or call 210-704-SAWS (7297).

Despite reduced revenue during the pandemic, there are no planned layoffs or furloughs for SAWS employees, thanks to the utility's strong financial planning. However, there will also be no performance-based pay raises for employees in 2021.

The 2021 SAWS budget can be viewed online at [saws.org/budget](https://saws.org/budget).

## Boring Time at the Ballpark



After 13 years, it's finally time to play ball. A massive tunnel boring machine was lowered deep into the abyss near Wolff Municipal Stadium — home of the San Antonio Missions baseball team — Nov. 11 on the city's Southwest Side. The sewer main replacement along U.S. Highway 90 and SW Military Drive near Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland involves five miles of tunneling more than 100 feet below ground, to avoid disrupting traffic and military activity. The much-needed infrastructure project, in the planning stages since 2007, will cost up to \$210 million and serve more than 500,000 San Antonians. SAWS officials say it's the most costly, complex sewer pipeline project in the city's history. Construction is expected to be completed in 2023.




Be safe and considerate of others — wear a mask when in public.

For the latest coronavirus guidance for San Antonio and Bexar County, visit [sanantonio.gov/covid19](http://sanantonio.gov/covid19). You can also text "COSAGOV" to 55000 or call 311.

## Grease, Wipes Clog Pipes

Greasy leftovers from small holiday gatherings can still cause huge problems. When it's time to clean-up, whatever you do — don't dump the scraps down the drain!

1   
**SCRAPE**  
 greasy solids directly into a lined trash can.

2   
**POUR**  
 cooled liquid grease into a sealable container.

3   
**WIPE**  
 remaining grease and debris with a paper towel.

The same goes for so-called "flushable" wipes — toss them into the trash, not the toilet.

Customer Service and 24-hour Emergency  
**210-704-SAWS (7297)**  
[saws.org/waternews](http://saws.org/waternews)

## Too Much Water Makes Winter Weeds Go Wild

In winter, landscape plants are not actively growing. Winter weeds, however, are busy multiplying with every drop of water they get.

As long as soil temperatures are below 70 degrees, turf grasses will not produce green shoots. What will turn green are germinating winter weeds like dandelions and henbit, along with all kinds of weedy grasses.



them from flowering and going to seed. So-called "weed and feed" products are not a good remedy — they only help the weeds grow.

Remember: Your lawn only needs about 1/2-inch of water per month in winter — even less if it rains. Shrubs and trees usually do fine on rainfall alone. But if you do need to water them, use a hand-held hose to target individual plants.

Visit [GardenStyleSA.com](http://GardenStyleSA.com) for weekly watering amounts and landscaping tips to keep your yard looking great using less water.

Your best defense against winter weeds? Frequent mowing or pulling. This keeps

## Assistance Programs To Help You

If you or someone you know needs help paying utility or other bills, there is help available.

SAWS Uplift eases the burden of paying your monthly water bills with 14 different assistance programs. Visit [saws.org/uplift](http://saws.org/uplift) to see if you qualify. You can also get extra time to pay by setting up a payment arrangement at [saws.org/arrangement](http://saws.org/arrangement) or 210-704-SAWS (7297).

Other help available:

### CPS Energy Residential Energy Assistance Partnership

Electric and gas utility bill payment assistance.

- [cpsenergy.com/utilityassistance](http://cpsenergy.com/utilityassistance)

### City of San Antonio Department of Human Services

Assistance for seniors, families with young children, those with disabilities, and individuals using critical medical care equipment.

- [sanantonio.gov/DHSutility](http://sanantonio.gov/DHSutility)
- 210-207-7830 or 311

### City of San Antonio Neighborhood & Housing Services Department

Housing assistance, including emergency housing due to COVID-19.

- [sanantonio.gov/NHSD](http://sanantonio.gov/NHSD)
- 210-207-5910 or 311

## YOU HAVE THE POWER TO SLOW THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

TU TIENES EL PODER DE DISMINUIR LOS CONTAGIOS DE COVID-19

 <p>Wear a mask Usa un cubrebocas</p>	 <p>Wash your hands Lávate las manos</p>	 <p>Practice physical distancing Practica el distanciamiento social</p>
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Do it for you.  
Do it for your family.  
Do it for San Antonio.

Hazlo por ti.  
Hazlo por tu familia.  
Hazlo por San Antonio.

Call 311 for support related to COVID-19  
**Llama al 311** para ayuda relacionada con COVID-19  
[covid19.sanantonio.gov](http://covid19.sanantonio.gov) #DoltForSA #HazloPorSA