

Frequently asked questions – Sewer bills (Residential - 2021)

<https://www.nccde.org/230/Sewer-Billing>

Q: Where can I pay my bill? Can I pay with a credit card?

A: County sewer bills can be paid by mail using the return envelopes that come with the bills. If you no longer have the return envelope, you may acquire the PO Box payment mailing address from New Castle County's website at <https://www.nccde.org/230/Sewer-Billing>.

Credit Cards are accepted through Paymentus, which can charge users a transaction fee of \$5.25 for each transaction per \$650 increment. If you are paying more than \$650, you will be required to pay with multiple transactions when using this service. Customers can pay New Castle County sewer service fees via the internet at <https://ipn.paymentus.com/otp/stde/nccu>, or by calling Paymentus at 1-877-225-7351.

Q: What time period does the bill cover?

A: All residential properties connected to the New Castle County sewer system are billed on an annual basis. This billing is mailed once a year in January in advance for the current calendar year. For example, sewer service bills mailed in January 2021 cover the calendar year ending December 31, 2021. However, your bill may also include a "Prior Account Balance" that remains unpaid at the time the bills were generated.

Q: Does my bill have to be paid in total by March 1, 2021?

A: Yes. By law (New Castle County Code, Sec. 38.02.503) any balance that remains on your account as of March 3, 2021 will be subject to a 6% penalty, and a 1% penalty each month thereafter.

Q: What is my sewer service bill based on?

A: Most sewer service bills are based on a property's actual water usage over a prior 12-month period. The property's water company provides this information to New Castle County. The water consumption amount is usually calculated using the first three quarters of the prior year and the fourth quarter of the year before that. For example, the annual sewer service amount for 2021 is usually based on the fourth calendar quarter of 2019, and the first three calendar quarters of 2020. The time periods used could vary slightly due to the meter read cycles of some water companies.

Q: How is the sewer bill calculated?

A: New Castle County compares the four quarterly usage amounts for each property. We then take the two lowest amounts, add them together, and multiply the total by two. This amount is considered your "annual consumption", which is then multiplied by the residential sewer rate (6.42917 per 1000 gallons) to determine your bill.

Q: Not all the water we use flows into the sewer system. Do you make adjustments for things like swimming pools and lawn sprinklers?

A: Yes. To calculate your usage, we take your two *lowest* usage quarters and double them. We disregard the two highest, which typically include warm-weather usage for pools and lawns. This is our way of allowing for water that may not pass through the sewer system. If you wish to have a more accurate account of the water you use that does not pass through the sewer system, you can have a meter installed that will measure only the water that will pass through the sewer system.

Q: Do you adjust for leaks?

A: Yes, we adjust for leaks that add to your usage, *but do not flow through the sewer system*. To receive this type of adjustment, the homeowner must send in documentation to prove the claim (example: a copy of a plumber's repair bill). Any leak that passes through or flows into the sewer system (example: a toilet leak) will not be adjusted.

Q: How do you calculate the bill for a new owner?

A: The first annual bill a new owner receives will be equal to the county average charge. The following year the owner will receive a bill based on their actual consumption, along with an adjustment for the prior year's billing. Depending on whether your first bill was an undercharge or an overcharge, the adjustment can either be an additional charge or a credit applied to the current bill.

Q: How do I qualify for a rate reduction if I am 65 years old, or disabled?

A: In order to qualify for a reduction on your sewer service charge, you must qualify for the county's senior and/or disability exemption. You must submit an application to the County's Assessment Division no later than June 1. If you already receive a Disability or Age 65 property tax exemption from New Castle County, you will automatically be billed the reduced rate for sewer service charges. For more information, or to obtain an application, contact the Assessment Division at (302) 395-5520.

Q: I did not receive my sewer service bill. Am I responsible for any penalty?

A: Yes. Failure to receive a bill does not relieve a property owner of the obligation to pay their sewer service bill on time. If you have not received your bill by February 7, please contact New Castle County at (302) 395-5340, or visit our website at <http://www3.nccde.org/parcel/search/>. Once you've entered your parcel number, hit search, then select details, you will then see a link for tax and sewer bills at the top of the page.

Q: How is the billing amount determined for a customer with a well?

A: An account that is serviced by a well is charged a standard flat rate fee. This rate is equal to 85% of the county's average charge, (for the 2021 billing cycle the well rate is \$244.00).