

# Understanding your City of Arcata Water and Sewer bill:

**Billing & Due Dates:** The City of Arcata reads each water meter every month. The billing date for your bill depends upon where in the city you are located. Your billing date cannot be changed. The due date is typically 30 days after the billing date. Unpaid accounts may be subject to a 10 percent delinquent charge.

**Billing Units:** The City of Arcata uses water meters that read in cubic feet. The City of Arcata bills in units of 100 cubic feet, 100 cubic feet is equal to 748 gallons. You are not charged for water consumption until the water meter dial has reached a full 100 cubic feet. You are billed on the difference between meter reads taken from one month to the next.

**Base rates and consumption:** Your water and sewer bills include charges for base rates and consumption. Even if you use no water during a month the base rates will still be assessed. The rates reflect the overhead cost associated with providing water and sewer service. Consumption charges reflect the direct cost associated for a specific amount of service.

**Sewer consumption:** Sewers are not metered in the City of Arcata. Sewer consumption is based on water consumption. During the summer months of June through September single-family residential customer's sewer bills are calculated based on their "Winter Average" water consumption to offset irrigation use. The Winter Average is based on the consumption billed between the months of February through April. This is intended to offset increased use of water during the summer that does not enter the sewer.

**Account numbers:** Each customer has an account number. This account number is used to process bills and payments. When making payments please include the payment stub from your bill or the account number. Without this information, there may be a delay in processing the payments. The City of Arcata is not responsible for delinquent charges that result because of insufficient or incorrect account information.

**Rates:** The City of Arcata normally adopts new rates starting with the new fiscal year on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Notices of proposed fee increases are mailed in April with a public hearing scheduled in June.

**Estimated reads:** There may be times when the City of Arcata cannot read your meter. Heavy rains, vehicles parked over the meter, and damage to the meter can result in the meter reader not being able to obtain a current read. If this occurs your bill will be estimated based your normal usage for that time of year. The City may contact you if the problem occurs on a regular basis to arrange for a solution to the problem.

**Water leaks and meter misreads:** An increase in water consumption can be the result of a number of factors including leaks, meter misreads, changes in the household, and irrigation. If you feel that your water consumption has an unusual increase you may request that your meter be reread and checked for leaks. A City of Arcata meter technician will check the reading on the meter and see if there are indications of a water leak. If the meter was found to be misread a correction will be made on the next bill. The account holder will be notified if there is any indication of a leak.

**Leak Adjustments:** Customers may request an adjustment for excessive water/sewer charges due to a water leak **once** during a 24-month period. An adjustment may be approved only after repairs have been made and verified by a city water technician. Adjustments will be based on the same time frame from the prior year. Only two consecutive bills may be adjusted during any 24-month period.

**Closing your account:** Please call the Finance Department at 822-5951 to discontinue service. Have the following information ready: Customer name and account number, date service is to be discontinued, and forwarding address. Failing to discontinue service will result in additional charges to the customer's account. An account cannot be closed retroactively.