

One of the most important roles of the Water Billing Department is to bill customers for the usage of the water that they use in their homes or businesses. Another essential role is to be able to provide customer service when a customer has a question regarding a utility bill. The city of Huntington has approximately 6,600 customers that are billed on a monthly basis. We have 3 different zones for the city. Each zone has a specific date range that is read by the meter reader. In addition, each zone has its own date that the bill is sent in the mail and due date.

- Zone 1 meters are read from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. They are sent in the mail on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. The due date is the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month
- Zone 2 meters are read from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month. They are sent in the mail on the 30<sup>th</sup> of each month. The due date is the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month
- Zone 3 meters are read from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> of each month. They are sent in the mail on the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month. The due date is the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month

We have one meter reader that reads the meters for the entire City of Huntington. We strive to have an approximate 30 day billing cycle but there are times when a billing cycle could be shorter or longer depending on holiday's, weather, or time off work.

Once the meters have been read the bills are sent out for each zone. We generally receive phone calls regarding various questions on the utility bill. The main question is when a customer gets a high bill they want to know why. It could be as simple as maybe a customer filled up a pool in the summer or maybe they were letting the water run to keep the pipes from freezing in the winter or it could be that a customer might have leak somewhere. When a customer gets a high bill and it could be due to a leak we first ask the customer to do some checking around the house. Here are the top 3 steps we ask a customer to follow:

1. Check for a silent leak in the toilet. It might not necessary be "running" therefore you would not know that there could be a possible problem. Just put a few drops of food coloring (or tablets can be picked up in the office for free) in the back of the toilet tank and let it sit for about 20 minutes and if the coloring goes into the toilet bowl, that means that the rubber flapper is not sealing correctly and it needs replaced.
2. Check on your water softener to see how often it is recycling. Sometimes we find out that they are recycling too frequently and need to be reset.
3. Check the humidifier on a furnace. Sometimes we find that the humidifier has a problem and is using quite a bit of water.

A few other places that a customer could have a potential problem would be the following: underground leaks, water heater, broken pipes, faucets, valves, outside spigots or an icemaker.

When you receive a high bill, it's easy to see why regularly checking for leaks and repairing them makes such good sense. These are all easy things to check on your own. If you do not find a problem with the above mentioned items we can always set up a date

and time for the serviceman to come out and check for any type of “running water”. But we first ask the customer to check the above referenced items.