



SUMMER IRRIGATION/WINTER AVERAGING POLICY

Winter Averaging Definition

Winter Averaging is a utility billing method used by the City of Arcata which calculates residential sewer flow charges based on water consumption during the winter when single family residential customers historically use the least amount of water. This method of billing results in lower sewer costs because single family customers will not be paying sewer charges for those purposes that do not result in water being introduced into the City's wastewater collection system, such as irrigation.

Winter Averaging Period

The Winter Averaging Period is February – April. Customers' usage during this period will determine the Sewer consumption cap June – September.

Winter Averaging Process

The City's sewer charges are directly tied to water usage. Each property is separately metered, and single family residences are restricted from having dedicated irrigation meters; this can lead to irrigation costs registering for applicable sewer charges. To compensate for this difference in usage, the City instituted the Sewer Cap for Single Family Residential Customers. Water usage is tracked from February through April because these months typically do not have high outdoor water demand and are considered to be the lowest overall water use. The usage is average to determine the sewer cap applicable for June through September. For example:

February Usage 4 units
March Usage 5 units
April Usage 7 units = 16 units / 3 = 5.33

In this case, the average usage for the winter months is 5.33 which results in a Sewer Cap of 5. Once the Sewer Cap is determined, it becomes effective June through September.

How it Works

The Sewer Cap sets the maximum that a customer will be charged for wastewater treatment (sewer) per month. The amount a customer is billed each month is based on their usage *up* to their cap. For example, using the sewer cap of 5 determined above:

Month	Units "Used"	Units Billed
June	5	5
July	7	5
August	4	4
September	8	5

* Winter Averaging only applies to Single Family Residential Properties. Commercial, Industrial and Multi-Unit customers who are concerned they may be paying sewer costs for irrigation may opt for a dedicated irrigation meter installed at their own expense.