

## CITY OF NEW HAVEN FACTSHEET

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### **Residential Sewer Averaging**

The City of New Haven began using a new method to calculate residential sewer bills, effective May, 2016. The new method is called “Sewer Averaging” and is designed to eliminate sewer charges for lawn and garden-watering, swimming pools and other similar spring and summer water uses.

Sewer Averaging calculates a monthly average for residential water consumption based on water usage during January, February and March. The average is calculated for each individual water customer. The average then is applied to the current sewer rate to determine the customer’s sewer charge for the following 12-month period.

**The following are some frequently asked questions regarding the Sewer Averaging method.**

#### **Why did the City change to this method?**

The City used to bill customers based on actual water consumption in any given month. Customers who watered lawn, gardens and had other summer uses would pay sewer charges based on that consumption. The Sewer Averaging method eliminates that and bills customers a flat monthly charge based on winter use. Water bills continue to be based on actual water consumption.

Further, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, which regulates public water and sewer systems in Missouri, recommends that cities and water districts adopt the sewer averaging methodology for calculating sewer bills. Approximately 40 percent of Missouri cities and water districts use this method.

#### **What if I didn’t establish a winter average?**

New residential customers and others who did not have water use during January-March pay a flat charge based on the average/median of *all* residential users during the January-March time period.

#### **As a new customer, is it fair that I am charged an average rate of all customers?**

We recognized that the average of all customers may be a bit high for some users, while low for others. However it is very difficult to predict how much water an individual customer will use, and water usages can vary greatly by individual households. Ultimately we feel that the difference in charges computed by the average rate vs. actual usage are generally very slight, and that the fairness factor in not charging for summer water uses outweigh the limited downsides.

#### **What if my winter average was skewed upward for some reason?**

We realize there may be a few instances where a customer’s winter average may be more than their actual use through the rest of the year. However the differences in these instances are anticipated to be very slight and generally are expected to balance out over time. If there are unusual or unique circumstances in your individual water use, please bring this to the attention of City staff.

#### **Why is my business not charged an average rate?**

The Sewer Averaging method applies to residential sewer customers only. Commercial and industrial customers are charged on actual water consumption, as usage may vary through the year for any variety of reasons. While some businesses may use water for summer purposes such as lawn-watering, this is very limited.