

**Water and Sewer Service
Frequently Asked Questions**
(Updated September 9, 2009)

Q. Who sets the water and sewer rates?

A. The water and sewer rates are set by the Illinois Commerce Commission based upon rate increase requests made by Illinois American Water Company.

Q. What is unaccounted for water and what role does it play in our rates?

A. Unaccounted for water is the difference between the amount of water that is metered coming into Homer Glen and the sum of the total amount of water measured and billed by each individual meter in the village. There will always be some unaccounted for water due to fire hydrant use, normal system leakage, and un-metered water use at new construction sites.

Q. What are all the charges on the water bill?

A. The Water and Sewer Bill contains six distinct and identified charges. These are:

Basic Service Charge

Basic rates charged by Illinois American and approved by the ICC vary by the size of the water meter installed. Smaller meters result in lower overall charges for the same level of usage. The size of the initial meter installed in a new home or building is based upon a formula in the plumbing code.

Use Charge

Based upon the amount of water used during the billing period. Purpose is to cover cost of providing water, maintaining mains and pumping stations at the local distribution site.

Supply Charge

Cost to purchase water from American Lake Water Company. These costs also incorporate expenses associated with the construction and maintenance of the pipeline.

Sewer Charge

A volumetric charge (based on winter month water usage) for management of residential sewage and wastewater.

Fire Protection Fee

Provides for the availability of water in the event of need.

State Recovery Tax

State of Illinois utility tax.

Q. Does the Village of Homer Glen play any role in the determination of water and sewer rates?

A. No. The Village has no authority under Illinois law to establish water and sewer rates. The role of the Task Force commissioned by the Village has been to investigate the rates and help determine what steps, if any, can be taken to reduce or control these costs.

Q. Does the Village of Homer Glen receive any monies from Illinois American from the water and sewer bills?

A. No. There is no franchise fee or local tax associated with the water and sewer service.

Q. How many customers does Illinois American serve in Homer Glen?

A. Illinois American currently serves about 6,000 homes in Homer Glen, or about **79%** of the community.

Q. What is the Village doing about the high cost of water?

A. The Village has questioned and taken legal action to stop IAW rate increases since its incorporation in 2001. The Village has worked with Representative Renee Kosel and Senator Christine Radogno in seeing legislation adopted that holds public water utilities more accountable for their service, practices and billing methods, and successful in petitioning the ICC to cap unaccounted for water, require annual fire hydrant inspections, stop illegal back billing practices. The Village has also intervened in the 2006 and 2008 rate cases. The Village will be joining with the Attorney General and other communities to intervene in the most recent proposal of a 29.72% increase in water and 50.96% in sewer rates.

In addition to being advocates for fair and reasonable rates, the Village continues to investigate the possibility of acquiring the utility. Mayor Jim Daley recently reported to the Board of a meeting held with adjacent communities that also receive IAW services through the Bedford Transmission Line. The group met in Homer Glen late last month to review confidential documents presented by their accounting and engineering consultants that have analyzed information provided by IAW for purposes of appraising the system. In addition to the group working together on the joint purchase of the transmission system, the communities are also investigating the acquisition of their individual distribution systems.

Q. What actions can I take to register my complaint about water rates or service with the Illinois Commerce Commission?

A. You can log into the ICC website and follow these directions:

1. www.icc.illinois.gov
2. Click on the link “Make a Public Comment” on the left side of the page
3. This will lead to a webpage for “File a Public comment on-line”

Q. I've complained to the Village, IAW, and ICC, What good is this doing?

A. Your actions have demonstrated that this issue is not an isolated circumstance. Consequently, being proactive has gotten the attention of the ICC commissioners, our state legislators and IAW.

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