

# AUSTIN UTILITIES NOW

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CITY SERVICES



November 2023

## Fiscal Year 2024 rates and fees highlights

Austin City Council approved the Fiscal Year 2024 budget in August. The \$5.5 billion budget significantly invests in essential City services and centers on Mayor and Council priorities.

As part of the budget process, the City Council also approves the rates and fees customers pay through their City of Austin Utilities bill. Below are some highlights on the FY 2024 rates and fees.

» **Austin Energy's** base rates increased 2%, starting Nov. 1. The increase strengthens the utility's financial health. In October, new pass-through rates were approved, also starting Nov. 1. The Regulatory Charge went down by 8% while the Community Benefit Charge went up by 53%.

Pass-through rates collect, dollar-for-dollar, costs around programs and services. With these changes, the typical residential customer will see a monthly bill increase of about \$2.44. In addition — as part of last year's base rate changes — the monthly Customer Charge increased by a dollar.

» **Austin Water's** residential rate increased 3.3% to keep up with rising costs while making investments in service reliability and water quality for our growing region. A typical residential customer will see an average monthly bill increase of \$2.65. This modest rate increase is necessary. New rates take effect Nov. 1. The rate increase does not apply to customers who are enrolled in the Customer Assistance Program.

For more information, please visit [austinwater.org](http://austinwater.org).

- » **The Development Services Department** Code Compliance portion of the Clean Community Fee was reduced to \$4.70 for single-family residences starting Oct. 1 — with no change in current service levels.
- » **The Watershed Protection Department** is increasing its drainage charge by 3.2% for the first time since 2015 to support rising cost of service for its operations. For a typical single-family home, the charge will increase from \$11.80 per month to \$12.17 per month. For more information, please visit [austintexas.gov/drainagecharge](http://austintexas.gov/drainagecharge).

You can find more billing information at [coutilities.com/go/billing](http://coutilities.com/go/billing).



### Lower your bill with wastewater averaging

Wastewater averaging takes place from mid-November through March, and it's a great opportunity for customers to lock-in the best wastewater rate possible for the next year. It's simple — all you have to do is reduce your water use as much as possible during your wastewater averaging period.

Austin Water calculates your wastewater average based on meter readings for the clean water you use. The meter readings are taken over the course of three consecutive months in the fall and winter known

as the wastewater averaging period. This coincides with seasonal low water use, when many households naturally cut back on irrigation, filling pools, washing cars and other outside water uses.

As the yearly wastewater averaging process begins, remember to do your part and conserve water. For information about how Austin Water is saving you money through wastewater averaging, a list of conservation tips or to find out when your wastewater averaging period begins, visit [austinwater.org](http://austinwater.org).



### An Austin tradition continues with the Zilker Tree lighting

The 57th annual Zilker Tree Lighting is presented by the Austin Parks and Recreation Department and Austin Energy with support from the Trail of Lights Foundation. The tree will be lit each night Nov. 26 through Jan. 1, 2024. Learn more at [austintexas.gov/zilkerholidaytree](http://austintexas.gov/zilkerholidaytree).

# Don't let the end of Daylight Saving Time get your driving down

The end of Daylight Saving Time means two things — an extra hour of sleep Sunday morning (yay), and one less hour of daylight during the evening commutes (boo). That reduced visibility can make the trip home more dangerous. If you're operating an automobile, these three tips can ensure you and others arrive home safely:

- » **Drive slower** so you can more easily react to changing circumstances.
- » **Store your phone while driving** so your eyes are up while the sun goes down.
- » **Cautiously approach crosswalks, intersections and bus stops** so you avoid striking pedestrians and bicyclists. Do you walk or bike home from



work or school? Drivers may struggle to see you. To improve your visibility:

- » **Use a safe crossing** like a lighted or marked crosswalk.
- » **Wear brightly colored** or reflective clothing and gear.
- » **Use front and rear lights** on your bicycle.

## Do your doody and Scoop the Poop!



Let's face it, dog poop stinks in more ways than one. It not only smells but also poses risks to humans, pets and our environment. So why do some people leave it lying around? Some might believe it's natural,

like animal scat, but that's far from the truth. Dog waste contains medicines and preservatives from processed food that wild animal scat doesn't. It's also laden with bacteria and pathogens that can stay in the soil for weeks or even months, like E. coli, salmonella and giardia. When it rains, poop left on the ground can wash into waterways, causing harmful algae and weed overgrowth and harming fish and wildlife. If left bagged along the trail or tied to a tree limb, it becomes litter. Trash cans at trailheads get emptied, but folks need to pick up their own bags on the trails. It is up to you to Scoop the Poop. Every. Stinking. Time! Find out more at [scoopthepoopaustin.org](http://scoopthepoopaustin.org).

## Get Ready. Stay Ready.

 Here's how you can be ready for any outage that comes your way:

- » **Know how to report an outage and sign up for outage alerts.**
- » **Learn how to stay safe during an outage.**
- » **Make sure Austin Energy has your current contact info.**
- » **Find more at [austinenrgy.com/outage](http://austinenrgy.com/outage).**



## Recycle plastics properly

There's often more to recycling than meets the eye. America Recycles Day, celebrated Nov. 15, aims to educate and encourage proper recycling, and in particular, the City of Austin wants to remind you about what to do with hard-to-recycle plastics.

Stretchy plastics — like single-use bags, plastic wrap and packaging — can't be recycled in your blue cart. However, a recent City of Austin study estimated that about 15% to 20% of contamination in Austin's recycling stream is from items like stretchy plastics.

Celebrate America Recycles Day by pledging to recycle more and recycle right every day.

- » **Take plastic bags, wrap and other stretchy plastics back** to retail and grocery stores or the Recycle & Reuse Drop-off Center for proper recycling.
- » **Reuse the plastic** you can't avoid.
- » **Download the Austin Recycles app** and use the "What Do I Do With..." tool to learn recycling options for stretchy plastics.
- » **Never bag your recycling.** Leave recyclables loose and dry when placing them in the blue cart.

Para obtener una copia en español de esta publicación, visite [coutilities.com/go/utilitynews](http://coutilities.com/go/utilitynews).

Customer Service Phone: 512-494-9400

24-Hour Power Outage Reporting: 512-322-9100 | 24-Hour Emergency Water Service: 512-972-1000

East Austin Utility Customer Service Center (Walk-in Center): 2800 Webberville Rd.

North Austin Utility Customer Service Center (Walk-in Center): 8716 Research Blvd., Ste. 115

South Austin Utility Customer Service Center (Walk-in Center): 1901 W. William Cannon Drive, Ste. 100

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