

Water Utility FAQ's

What does it mean when you say you are flushing the lines?

When flushing water lines or mains, an operator opens a blow-off valve or water hydrant to flow water at a high rate to create enough velocity to strip sediment that collects on the inside of the piping walls.

How many gallons of water do I use?

We measure our water in cubic feet. Your utility bill is in c.c.f. (hundred cubic feet). To know how many cubic feet you have used, add two zeros to the number on your statement (i.e. 10 = 1000 c.f.) One cubic foot equals 7.48 gallons, so just multiply the number of cubic feet listed on your bill by 7.48 and you will know how many gallons you have used.

Is there fluoride in the water?

No, the City of DuPont does not fluoridate any of the City's water.

How can I find my meter?

Meters are generally situated on your property corner near a road on what is called a "utility easement" to the property. Look for a rectangular lid to the meter box, which is flush to the ground.

If it is discovered I have a leak, how do I know if it is something I have to pay to fix or something the City will repair?

The City will repair any leaks in the portion of the water system we own, which in most cases ends at your side of the water meter that connects your home to our main. The service line to your home, as well as the plumbing in your home, is the property owner's responsibility. We will assist you in finding your leak when possible, and are more than willing to answer any questions you might have about how to get it fixed.

Can I get an adjustment to my bill if I have a substantial leak?

A water leak rate adjustment is permitted once in a two-year period and can only be applied to one billing cycle. For further information on the necessary criteria, please contact the Utility Billing Department in City Hall at (253) 912-5210 or (253) 964-8121.

How often do you bill?

The billing cycle is approximately 60 days. We bill every two months with the bills mailed the first week of the odd numbered months (Jan, March, May, July, Sept, Nov).

What is the adjustment that appears on my bill?

Fees and penalties are billed under the adjustment category. They include late charges, new account setup fees, NSF fees, etc.

Are water bills estimated or actually read?

The water meters are actually read by our Public Works Department. Water bills are not estimated.

What forms of payment do you accept?

Currently the City of DuPont accepts cash, checks and money orders. VISA, MasterCard, and Discover Card payments can be made only at the counter in City Hall. Direct Debit from your bank account is also available and requires the appropriate paperwork.

Why is my bill unusually high?

Undetected leaks are often to blame and can cause hundreds of gallons of water to be lost daily. The most common type of leak is from the toilet running continuously. Water faucets that do not turn off completely can also mean an increased bill.

An increase in water usage can also occur during the warmer, dryer weather of the summer months and increased landscape watering. Make sure the timer on your automatic sprinkler is not set to water too long or too often. Occasionally under ground irrigation systems can leak during usage, causing an excessively high water bill. If you are concerned that you may have a leak, the City is more than willing to come out and check for you.

Another possible cause could be a miss-read water meter. If this should happen, the City will re-read your meter and make any necessary adjustments.

Why do I not have any water?

Occasional service interruptions are necessary for various reasons such as flushing, main maintenance, main breaks, and hydrant repair/replacement. Customers are given prior notice of any scheduled interruptions.

Non-payment of your utility bill will result in an interruption of service. Once your meter is locked off, the past due and the newer current bill must be paid in full in order to restore service (see below).

What is your policy for shutting off water due to non-payment?

Utility bills covering a 60-day billing cycle are sent out the first week of the odd numbered month following the billing period and are due upon receipt. The first of the following month we will send out past due notices with a 10% late charge (minimum \$10 chg) on any past due balance. By the first of the next month (when the next bills are being mailed), if the balance is still not paid, you will find a bright yellow door hanger on your door giving you 48 hours to pay your bill in full or the water will be shut off. If, within the next 48 hours, you have not paid your bill, we will send someone from our Public Works department to your home to shut off and lock your water meter. Your meter will remain locked off until you have paid all past due and current charges, plus an additional \$25 turn on fee (\$75 if after hours).

What is a backflow prevention device and why does it have to be tested yearly?

A backflow prevention device is required by the State of Washington to be installed on every water connection that may be exposed to potential contaminates. These assemblies prevent contaminated water from entering the public water supply or your residential water system. Most backflow devices are installed on home lawn sprinkler systems.

State of Washington regulation WAC 246-290-490 requires this device installation and its annual testing to assure the device is working correctly. Contact (253) 912-5292 to inquire if your home's backflow device is due for an inspection.

How do I sign up for, or cancel, my utility account?

To set up a new account, whether purchasing your home or renting, it will be necessary for you to contact the utility billing department within City Hall at (253) 912-5210 or (253) 964-8121. You will be required to complete an application form providing billing and other pertinent information. As an owner or property manager of a rental home, you are required to complete a Utility Rental Authorization Form whenever a renter moves in. Also, if you need to cancel or update your account, you will need to call or stop by the utility billing department in City Hall at 1700 Civic Drive.

Do you charge a deposit for utility services?

The City of DuPont charges a \$100 water deposit to renters only. As the owner is still ultimately responsible for the utilities on the property, the only time we do not charge a deposit is if the owner signs a waiver.

Also, by RCW .35.21.217, the City may provide duplicates of tenant utility service bills to the owner or management company and may notify an owner if the tenant's utility account is delinquent.

If owners or renters have 2 NSF checks received within a 1 year period, or 2 yellow door hangers received within a 6 month period, they will be charged a \$100 deposit. For renters, this would be in addition to their original \$100 deposit.

What are the utility rates?

Residential utility rates for 2011 are as follows:

- Water:** \$38.20 for a 60 day period for up to 1000 cubic feet of water.
\$1.35 per hundred cubic feet over 1000.
- Stormwater:** \$19.10 for a 60 day period.

For commercial and multi-family rates, please call the utility billing department in City Hall.

Is there a senior citizen or low-income disability discount?

The City allows a discount off the base rate for water, if the proper criteria are met. Contact the utility billing department at City Hall at (253) 964-8121 or (253) 912-5210 for the required paperwork. Once the paperwork is submitted, along with the supporting documentation, your request can be reviewed.