



## TRAVIS COUNTY WATER CONTROL AND IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT 17

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Here are some frequently asked questions and answers for new customers. To learn even more about your water and wastewater service area, please go to [www.wcid17.org](http://www.wcid17.org).

### **What is a WCID?**

A Water Control and Improvement District (WCID) is a political subdivision of the State of Texas, and is empowered to purchase, construct, operate, and maintain everything necessary to provide water, wastewater and drainage services. Like school districts and fire districts, a WCID can collect taxes, charge service fees, operate facilities, own land, condemn property, and pass ordinances. A five (5) member Board of Directors is elected by the residents to serve four (4) year staggered terms. Elections are held every two years on the first Saturday in May. District 17 is a non-profit public utility regulated by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

### **Why is there a 3-day disconnect notice on the door of my new home?**

When the District is notified that a residence is changing ownership, a three-day notice is sometimes placed on the door to remind the new owner to sign up for service. If no one has opened a new account and usage is noted on the meter, another notice may be issued. If you have applied for service and paid all necessary fees, you may simply disregard this notice.

### **Why is my bill so high?**

There are several reasons your bill could be abnormally high. The most likely reason is an undetected leak. A running toilet, for example, is like an open hose and can use hundreds of thousands of gallons per month. If you have checked for a leak and cannot find one, the District can send a technician to pull data from your meter and produce a graphic display of your usage to help determine if it is a leak or irrigation that has caused the increase in usage.

In the summer, bills will be higher due to outdoor irrigation, filling swimming pools or watering new plants or sod. An average irrigation cycles about 3,500 gallons, and some can use up to 7,500 gallons per cycle. Check your irrigation controller to make sure you are not running multiple cycles. Average residential winter usage is about 10,000 gallons. Average summer residential usage is 16,000 – 25,000 gallons.

### **Can I pay my bill on line?**

This is a feature that is coming soon; please check back with us or online around February. In the meantime, you may pay either by mail, monthly credit card or electronic funds transfer.

### **Why do I need to pay a deposit, I have excellent credit?**

District policy states a deposit must be collected from all new accounts unless the applicant has had a previous account in good standing with WCID 17.

### **Do you accept letters of credit from other utility companies?**

We do not accept these letters. If you have a previous good payment history (12 months) on another account with District 17 only a connect fee of \$35.00 is charged for a new account. Otherwise, you will need to pay a deposit that is refundable after one year of good payment history. This deposit is automatically posted as a credit to your account after 12 months of timely payments.

### **Do landlords have to pay deposits?**

Tenants usually pay all fees associated with their accounts, however, when a tenant moves out and the landlord has to transfer an account to himself temporarily the landlord must pay a \$35.00 connect fee. In most cases deposits for these temporary transfers are waived.

### **Do you estimate the bills? I never see anyone reading my meter and it's all covered in dirt.**

Your usage is never estimated. District 17 uses radio capable meters which read electronically each month. Readings are sent wirelessly from your meter to the technician's laptop as the technician drives through the neighborhood.

### **Can I change my due date for my bill?**

The due dates are very time sensitive because all meters are read within a short time window. Schedules are set for the year and cannot be changed. The bill processing schedule including notices, meter reads, disconnects, formulating and mailing bills is done on a strict schedule.

### **Can you set me up for paperless billing?**

This capability is not currently available; everyone gets mailed a statement each month.

### **Can I view my historical usage and payment history on line?**

Not at this time, however, the data you need can be emailed to you upon request.

### **Can I go online and view how much water I've used since the last read or in the last week?**

This information is not online; but, there are several ways to get this data. You can go to your meter and take a meter reading and subtract the read from the last read that is on your bill to find out your usage since last billing. If you cannot locate your meter or have problems we can send a technician out to show you how to read the meter and get a reading for you. A clerk will follow-up with the read to let you know. You may also take a reading the same time each day to gather your 24-hour usage.

### **Where does my water come from?**

The District's water source is Lake Travis. Water is pumped from the lake and treated using a state of the art microfiltration process.

### **How do I check for a leak?**

Simply turn off irrigation system and everything in the house; i.e. washing machine, shower, dishwasher; go to your meter and see if the dial is spinning, even a slight spin indicates a leak. A toilet running unnoticed can surprisingly cause a huge increase in your usage.

### **Why is the pressure low in parts of my house?**

You may need a new Pressure Regulator Valve (PRV); they typically last from 5-8 years. We can check your pressure and let you know if you need one. For your convenience, we sell the PRV's at the District Administration office for \$40.00 and \$50.00 (depending on the size) or they may be purchased at any local hardware store. You or a plumber will have to install the PRV.

### **Whom do I call if I have a water leak or sewer problems?**

During working hours, call the District office at 512-266-1111, ext. 10. After hours, call the emergency phone number; 512-537-8302. Call Water District 17 first before calling a plumber unless you are sure the problem is in your house or on your property. We will investigate the problem, and if it is on our side, we will repair it. CALL US FIRST, WE ARE HERE TO HELP.

### **When are board meetings held?**

The Board of Directors meets every month on the third Thursday at 6:00 pm at the District office at 3812 Eck Lane. There is always a posting for public comment at 6:30 pm, and everyone is welcome. The agenda is posted each month at the Travis County Courthouse, in a bulletin case outside the District 17 offices on Eck Lane, and on the website under Agendas and Minutes.

### **What is a defined area?**

A defined area is a specified area, usually (but not always) an undeveloped area, within the District which has been identified as needing water and/or wastewater service. Defined areas can only be established by a general election vote by both District 17 residents and defined area residents. Once the defined area is established, utilities are installed either by a developer who pays the costs or by the District using loan money. Utility installations are inspected by the District and Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) personnel. The TCEQ monitors and approves every step in the bond issuance process, and must approve every issue made by the Board.

When the TCEQ has approved the utilities, and enough development has occurred in the area to establish a tax rate, (usually this process takes several years) the District issues bonds and uses the money to purchase the installed utilities from the developer or to pay off loans taken out for the purpose of installing the utilities. Residents of the defined areas pay a special defined area tax in addition to the District-wide tax to pay off the bonds.

### **What is the hardness of the water?**

Water in this area is classified as hard. Hardness is measured in calcium carbonate (CaCO<sub>3</sub>) equivalents in milligrams/liter (mg/l) and is an indicator of the amount of calcium, magnesium, and other ions in the water. Hardness readings range from 154-239 mg/l which converts to 8.99-14 grains per gallon. The average is about 190 mg/l or 11.1 grains per gallon. To convert milligrams to grains per gallon, multiply hardness in mg/l x 0.0584.

Visit the website for other water quality information.

