



## TRAVIS COUNTY WATER CONTROL AND IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT 17

3812 Eck Lane • Austin, Texas 78734  
• Phone (512) 266-1111 • Fax (512) 266-2790

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 (even). 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 placed on the door to remind the new owner to sign up for service. If no one has opened a new account after 3-days, the water will be turned off and the meter will be locked. At this point the new resident will need to contact the District and establish service. If you have applied for service and paid all necessary fees when you read the three-day notice, 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.

### **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.

### **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?**

Schedules are set each January for the entire year. The due dates are very time sensitive because all meters are read within a short time window. The bill processing schedule includes notices, meter reads, disconnects, formulating and mailing bills on this set schedule.

## **Can you set up an online account for me?**

Due to privacy and sensitive banking information involving credit cards and checking/savings accounts, District personnel cannot set up your online account for security reasons. There is a special Security Code on your bill (top right corner) that is used to set up your online account. Go to [www.wcid17.org](http://www.wcid17.org) and LOGIN and then SIGN UP using the Security Code (found on your monthly bill) and then following the prompts.

## **The Security Code does not work, what do I do?**

Call the office if you are having trouble with the security code as they are case sensitive involving numbers and upper case letters. We can send you an email that bypasses the security code and it simplifies the online set up procedure.

## **I registered my online account and paid the bill, but why didn't the following months bill get paid?**

To set up auto pay there is a final step that needs to be completed. Once logged in, go to My Account and then in the left column midway down, **select AUTO PAY. There is a grayed out box that says OFF – click into the box and turn it ON – read and accept the Terms and Conditions.** Once it says SUCCESS you are then set up for auto pay. Auto pay can take 30 days to set up so you will need to process a one-time payment of your current month's payment.

## **I'm a landlord and business owner and I have multiple accounts, how do I set them up under one umbrella?**

LOGIN to your account and click on My Account and view the left column and click Connected Accounts. You will see a green tab in the right corner that says ADD NEW ACCOUNT. Type in the Security Code for the next account and enter the zip code just below. Follow the same instructions for multiple accounts on

that same page. This will use the same banking information for all accounts. Remember, if you are set up on a credit card there is a \$2 per account fee charged. No charges for eCheck. If you want to utilize auto pay, don't forget to TURN ON Auto Pay for each account.

### **How do I change my payment method?**

LOGIN to your account and go to My Account. The left column will display Payment Methods half-way down. Click onto Payment Methods and you will see Autopay/Edit/Delete or Add New Payment Method. Just select the option you want to use.

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

Yes, to go paperless and stop receiving paper statements in the mail, call the office or go into your online account and select My Account and then on the left column is Bill Delivery – just under that selection is eBill, click into that tab. There will be a grayed out box on the right that says OFF – just click into the box and turn ON. Bill Delivery has three (3) choices, eBill, paper & eBill or paper only. If you change your email address, please update “My Account.”

### **Can I view/print my bills or see my transaction history online?**

Yes, LOGIN to your account and select Transaction History, you will be able to view your payment history and view/print your bills. Currently, there is a limited information to view due to the new billing system implementation date of April 1, 2019. Call the office to get your complete history emailed to you.

### **What else can I edit online?**

You can edit your email address, username and password and mailing address. Just go to My Account and view the column on the left titled About Me, click into your desired tab to edit. You may also call the office and a representative can help change your username and password.

### **I use a bill pay service through my bank, they send paper checks and sometimes wire payments, can I still send payments this way?**

Yes, the District accepts both checks and wire payments from your bank.

## **When I subtract the readings on my statement, why does it not equal the usage?**

You have to add the multiplier to the reading: **5/8” to 1” meter, add a 0. 1-1/2” to 3” meter, add 00. 4” and larger meter, add 000.** If in doubt, feel free to call the office for assistance.

## **Why is my wastewater charge more than my water?**

If you are a new customer or an existing customer in a new home, the wastewater charge is based on a District-wide monthly average of 8,000 gallons. Another reason your wastewater charge could be higher is that your averaging usage during the months of mid-November to mid-February were high. Please feel free to call the District office for clarification at 512-266-1111, extension 118 or 116.

## **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. You can purchase a PRV at any local hardware store and you or a plumber can 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. 110. 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 meet 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 in the public bulletin case next to the front door of the District 17 office on Eck Lane, and on the website, [www.wcid17.org](http://www.wcid17.org), tabbed Administration/Board Meetings.

### **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.

Please visit the website, [www.wcid17.org](http://www.wcid17.org), for other water quality information.