

SUMMER 2026

Utility Update



COLUMBUS
WATER & POWER

columbus.gov/cwp

Bill Payment and Discount Options

Columbus Water & Power customers have a variety of options to pay their water, sewer, stormwater or municipal electric bills. Additionally, customers are being notified that they will be moving to monthly billing following their meter replacements. Monthly billing is a major benefit of our Enhanced Metering Project, which has been underway the past few years and will help many households budget easier.

Bill payment options:

- **By mail:** using the address on your bill.
- **Phone:** call 614-645-8276.
- **Online:** through our secure Customer Portal at schedulepayment.com/columbus, where you can also sign up for an e-bill, auto draft, or make a one-time payment as needed.
- **In person:**
 - 24-hour drop box at the Michael B. Coleman Government Center, 111 N. Front Street.
 - Western Union locations throughout the central Ohio area. A list of locations can be found on our website at columbus.gov/cwp.

Behind on Your Bill?

Payment plans are available to help you catch up on your bill. Please apply online at columbus.gov/payassist. For questions or help applying, please contact Customer Service at 614-645-8276 (weekdays 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.) or email Water@columbus.gov.

Discount Programs

Discounts are available for income-qualifying customers. If approved, qualified customers receive 30% off water and sewer usage fees. If age 60 or over, you may also qualify for an additional senior discount. For details and to apply, contact Customer Service for help or visit columbus.gov/payassist.



Everyone Can Save on Their Bills

Summer can often bring the highest water bills of the year due to extra activities like outside lawn watering, washing cars, use of kiddie pools, slip and slides etc. Remember that a healthy lawn only needs 1" of water a week and to check weather forecasts before watering.

Leaking toilets are another frequent cause of high bills. If you hear your toilet making flushing sounds when it has not been used recently, or have to jiggle the handle to make it stop, you may have a flapper or other toilet leak. Contact Customer Service for leak detection troubleshooting tips and dye testing strips (food dye or dark cola work for this too) at 614-645-8276 or Water@columbus.gov.

Everyone can save money on their utility bills by watching consumption of water and power and by making timely repairs to leaky toilets and fixtures. Conservation tips can be found on our website at columbus.gov/BeMoreGreen.

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Frequently Asked Questions about Sewer Overflows

What are CSOs and SSOs?

Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) are discharges of wastewater and stormwater from the combined sewer system that serves the downtown and surrounding older areas. Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSOs) are discharges of wastewater from the sanitary sewer system. Sewer overflows can occur at various discharge points along waterways when volume temporarily exceeds capacity, typically during wet weather.

Why do sewer overflows exist?

Many years ago, prior to the existence of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or Clean Water Act, it was common design for such relief points to exist in a sewer system to prevent backups into homes during wet weather and major rain events.

Are overflows an issue in other cities?

Yes. Solving wet-weather issues is the biggest challenge facing most sewer districts today.

What is Columbus doing about it?

Columbus Water & Power developed a Wet Weather Management Plan in 2005, identifying an estimated \$2.5 billion in capital improvements over 40 years on the combined and sanitary sewer collection systems, and at the two water reclamation plants. To specifically target SSOs, Blueprint Columbus was developed to address overflows by lining home sewer laterals, preventing stormwater infiltration. That stormwater is then redirected through new downspouts and sump pumps to green infrastructure before filtering into our rivers and streams. Please see columbus.gov/utilities/clean-rivers and columbus.gov/blueprint for more information.

How will central Ohio residents benefit?

Anything that improves our environment benefits our community. Solving wet weather issues also reduces sewer backups into basements. If you live in a Blueprint neighborhood, you may be eligible for roof water redirection, lateral lining, and sump pump installation at no direct cost to you.

How are sewer improvements financed?

Sanitary sewer rate revenue and low-interest loan programs, such as the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund through the Ohio EPA, finance these infrastructure improvements. The Clean River surcharge on your Columbus sewer bill is used to repay the debt incurred on the projects. An affordability analysis was conducted to determine the community's ability to finance the plan, and revenue needs are reviewed annually.

Where are the overflow points located?

Discharge locations are along the Olentangy River from Worthington to First Avenue, on the Scioto River from around Neil Avenue to S.R. 104, and on Alum Creek from Main Street to I-70. The locations are marked with signage.

How often do they overflow?

Frequency and volume depend on the amount of rainfall and other factors. Visit columbus.gov/csoso for more information.

Should residents report overflows and backups?

Yes, please report any suspected overflows or basement backups in Columbus immediately to the 24-hour Sewer Maintenance Operations Center at 614-645-7102 or through 311. Reporting a basement sewer backup promptly is also the first step necessary to determine eligibility for the Project Dry Basement backflow prevention program for single and two-family homes in Columbus. If your home is determined to be eligible, an application will be mailed, or find it online: columbus.gov/PDB.

If I see an overflow sign, is it safe to swim near it?

No. First, be aware that swimming in local waters is prohibited by city code and is considered a drowning risk in some locations due to lowhead dams and utility crossings. To avoid possible negative health effects, always avoid water contact (including boating, wading, fishing, and swimming) near a sewer overflow location, especially following periods of heavy rain. For more information on possible health and environmental effects, please visit: epa.gov/npdes/2004-npdes-cso-report-congress.

Can residents help prevent overflows?

Yes. Please check your downspouts and foundation drains to confirm they are not connected to the sanitary sewer. Common in homes built before 1963, these outdated connections add excess water to the system during rain events and contribute to overflows/basement backups. For instructions on how to disconnect downspouts, please visit the sewer publications in our document library at columbus.gov/cwp. If your foundation drain is connected to the sanitary sewer, you may need a sump pump to direct it into the stormwater system.

Properly disposing of grease also helps prevent sewer blockages. Place grease in the trash in a sealed container such as a coffee can; do not pour down the drain. Never flush disposable wipes, even those labeled "flushable" because they do not disintegrate and can cause clogs. In addition, please make any needed repairs on your home sewer line to prevent excess water from entering the system through cracks (often caused by tree roots).