

## Understanding Your Utilities Bill

### What do we mean by User Rates?

The City of Vernon charges residents for water consumption and sewer through a User Rate System. Residents pay for what they use through fees. In other words, the more you use, the more you pay. The City of Vernon believes that this type of system helps promote conservation.

### When do charges start?

Charges for water and sewer, garbage and yard recycling start as soon as the water is turned on for a property. Charges also start 60 days after a plumbing inspection approval date or immediately after the installation of the water meter.

### How do I stop charges?

In order to stop water and sewer charges; a water turn off request must be made. Please note that water infrastructure and sewer infrastructure base charges will always remain in effect.

To resume services a turn on date is required. Current fees for both turn on and turn off can be found at [www.rdno.ca/bylaws](http://www.rdno.ca/bylaws).

### When am I billed?

Bills for water, sewer, garbage and yard recycling are sent out four times a year, or every three months, January, April, July and October. Water meters are read once every three months.

### What if bills aren't paid?

Unpaid water, sewer, garbage, and yard recycling rates are carried forward to the next statement and interest is calculated every

billing period. Any unpaid user rate amounts on December 31 are automatically transferred to taxes as arrears and interest is calculated daily.

### Where and when do I pay?

- In person at City Hall
- Through the City's Utility Auto Debit Plan
- Most major banks, trust companies and credit unions in Canada
- Through PC banking and telephone banking (contact your financial institution for details)
- By regular mail
- The drop box at City Hall

Interest applies if payment is received at the payment location after 4:30 pm on the due date printed on the bill. If you choose to mail your payment, please allow sufficient time for it to reach City Hall by the due date.

To assist those leaving for extended vacations, the City also accepts prepayments and post dated cheques, up to six months.

### What if ownership changes?

The City does not read meters when ownership changes hands. The utility account stays with the property. The statement of adjustments you received from your lawyer or notary should show any necessary adjustments made to your account. Please contact your lawyer directly if this adjustment was not done.

### **Service is Mandatory**

Every house connected to the City's sewer system and Greater Vernon Water (GVW) system must pay the user fees.

All residential property owners must pay for basic garbage collection and recycling programs. Basic services currently allows for the disposal of two standard size cans or bags of garbage every week, plus spring chipping, Christmas tree disposal and the spring and fall leaf removal programs.

### **Garbage**

Garbage collection is based on a flat fee. Each residence is allowed 2 cans of garbage pick up per week.

### **Yard Recycling**

Yard recycling collection is based on a flat fee. The City provides yard recycling for the following programs: spring chipping, Christmas tree disposal as well as the spring and fall leaf removal.

### **Additional Garbage Service**

Each additional container of garbage above the quota can be collected by purchasing garbage tags at \$1.50 per bag at the following locations:

- Vernon City Hall
- Vernon Recreation Complex

### **Residential Sewer**

Sewer is based on your 1<sup>st</sup> quarter water consumption and remains in effect for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

### **Water**

The water service is the responsibility of GVW and the City undertakes billing and maintenance services on their behalf.

### **“Normal” Water Consumption**

Water consumption varies greatly from one house to the next, depending on the number of people living in the home and their water usage habits. Lawn and garden watering, sprinkler systems, pools and car washing can all increase water consumption considerably.

### **Typical winter consumption might be:**

1 or 2 occupants	20-50 m <sup>3</sup> /Qtr
3 or 4 occupants	60-100m <sup>3</sup> /Qtr
5 or more occupants	100+m <sup>3</sup> /Qtr

### **Checking for a water leak:**

- Check taps, toilets, etc. to ensure no water is running.
- Read and record meter reading.
- Refrain from using any water for an extended period of time, such as overnight.
- Read and record meter reading again before you use any water. If the meter has moved, there might be a leak and a need to consult a plumber.

### **Measuring Water Usage**

All water is billed based on cubic meters.

### **Conversion:**

Cubic meters to gallons – multiply by 220

Gallons to cubic meters – multiply by .004546

1 cubic meter= 1,000 Liters