



CITY OF HOUSTON

Public Works and Engineering
Department

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2010 Residential Lawn Meter Fact Sheet

Many people wonder if they can save money by installing a lawn meter at their home. A lawn meter measures the water used outdoors and the account is charged for water only, not for sewer. Customers with a lawn meter will receive a separate bill for this meter.

To decide if a lawn meter is right for you, you must first estimate how much water you use outdoors. One way to do this is to compare your winter and summer average consumptions, shown on the front of your bill. Unless your regular indoor water usage (laundry, bathing, cooking, etc.) varies greatly by season, most of the increased summer usage will be for your lawn watering.

Now, compare the monthly billing for a lawn meter and your commercial meter against the regular cost of service. The basic charge varies by meter size, and does not include any consumption. For 1.5 inch and larger meters, water use is billed at the first tier rate until the designated quantity is reached. All water in excess of the designated quantity is billed at the second tier rates. All consumption on 5/8, 3/4, and 1 inch meters is at the second tier rate. You may not always save money by installing a separate meter, depending on the amount of usage. The following rate chart and examples may help you make the decision.

Meter Size:	5/8 & 3/4	1	1.5	2	3	4	6	8+
Basic Charge	\$22.44	\$25.16	\$66.79	\$103.23	\$224.11	\$379.41	\$781.32	\$1129.88
Designated Quantity: up to this amount at First Tier rate of \$2.61 per 1,000	0	0	10,000	16,000	35,000	60,000	125,000	180,000
All additional consumption at Second Tier rate of \$6.01 per 1,000								

g/m=gallons/month	7,000 g/m	14,000 g/m	30,000 g/m
5/8" residential meter only (water/sewer charge) (no lawn meter installed)	\$62.14	\$132.66	\$320.82
5/8" residential meter (water/sewer charge) (Usage is based on 3,000 gallons monthly)	\$17.41	\$17.41	\$17.41
5/8" lawn meter (Remainder of water used for lawn)	\$46.48	\$88.55	\$184.71
Total monthly cost for both meters	<u>\$63.89</u>	<u>\$105.96</u>	<u>\$202.12</u>

Remember that this is just an example. You must look at your own actual usage to evaluate if you may be able to save money with a lawn meter. Your total cost for installation will include city fees and plumber costs. A city-approved plumber must install the lawn meter for you. Contact the Taps & Meters Section at 832-395-4400 for a list of approved plumbers and required city fees to install a lawn meter.

To determine whether installing a lawn meter will save you money, obtain your consumption history by going online at www.houstonwaterbills.org. Contact one or more plumbers from the approved list for an estimate of installation costs. Compare winter and summer consumption to determine how much watering you are doing, and calculate the charges for each meter. Then add the monthly charges for both meters, plus all the installation costs, and compare against your normal summer billing to determine the possible savings during the summer months. It may take more than one year to recoup your investment.