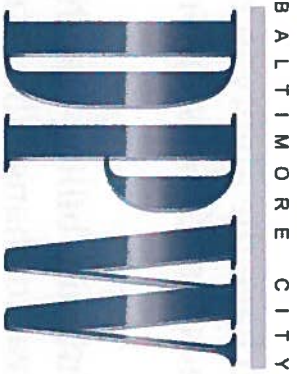
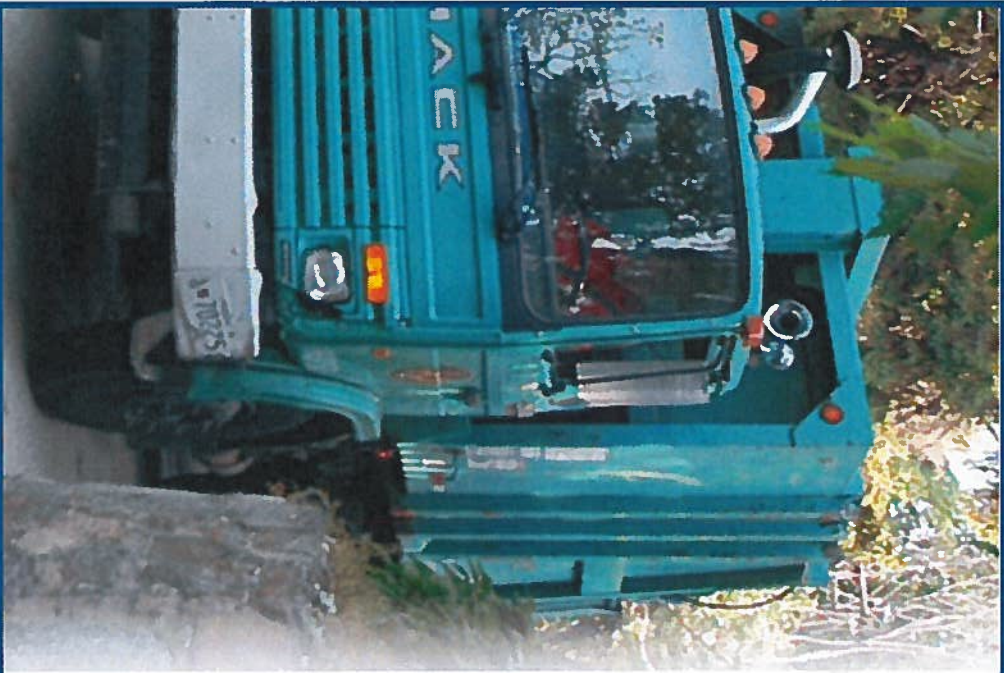
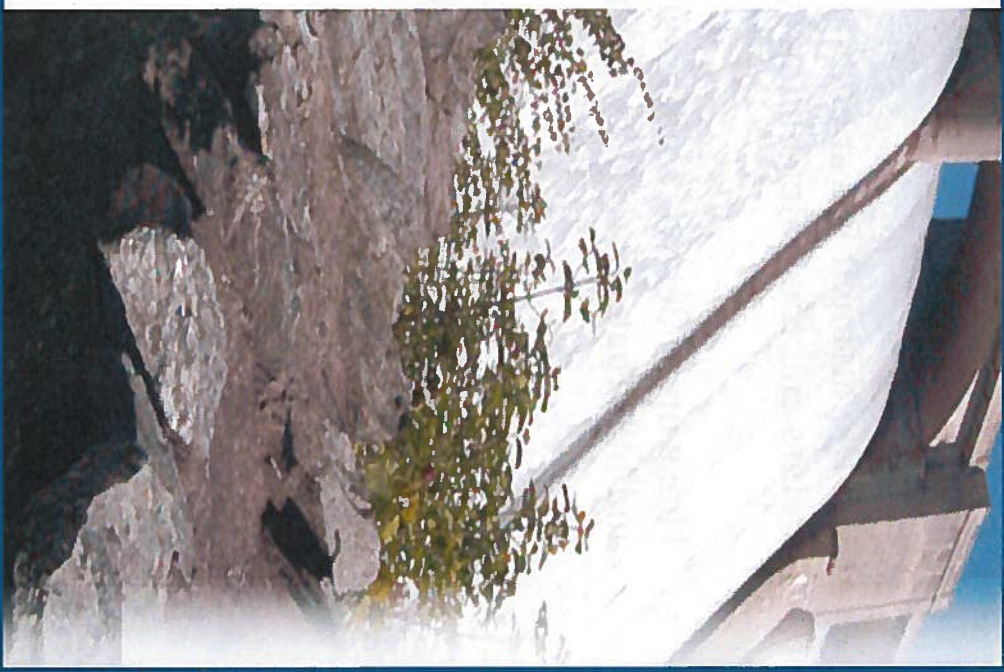


Baltimore City Department of Public Works



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
RUDOLPH S. CHOW, P. E.
DIRECTOR



Changes to Water Bills and Charges

- The Department has spent more than 2 years investing in and modernizing the water meters and the water billing system.
- These upgrades were necessary to have the ability to record detailed water usage data and bills that clearly lists all charges that the customer is paying for.
- To address the concerns about minimum billing and declining block rates, the Department had to request approval to change the rate structure.
- All of these changes were implemented on October 11, 2016.



BaltiMeter and Water Billing Program

BaltiMeter – a multi-year comprehensive effort to change the way customer water consumption is collected.

The new metering system provides hourly water consumption reads.

The more than 30 year old Legacy water billing system is replaced with a new, more flexible billing system.

The new billing system enabled the City to replace quarterly water billing with monthly billing.



Baltimore City Department of Public Works



BaltiMeter and Water Billing Program

- 199,000 metered accounts in Baltimore City; 202,000 metered accounts in Baltimore County
- By April 1, 2016 the vendor met the City's requirement to complete all City meter installations available to the vendor. The remaining 6% of City meter installations were occurring as meter vaults or account information issues were corrected.
- By April 1, 2017 the installation vendor is required to complete meter installations in Baltimore County. As of June 2016 the County installations were 66% complete.
- October 11, 2016: BaltiMeter and Water Billing Program activated in the City
- July, 2017: Full BaltiMeter Program "goes live" in the County



BaltiMeter and Monthly Billing Program

- Monthly bills are in line with household budgeting. Bills will arrive and be due around the same time each month which will help customers better plan for their water bills.
- The new bills are easier to read, more clearly show what customers are being charged for, and will begin to show historical usage.
- Customers will have the ability to better track their consumption with an easy-to-read bill and an online customer service portal.
- We are now able to offer more flexible payment plans for customers who may fall behind on their bills.



Baltimore City Department of Public Works



RICHARD S. CHOW, P. E.
DIRECTOR

Rate Structure Change

- The Rate Structure for water and sewer rates included all charges to keep the utilities balanced
 - The Rate Structure was based on a declining block rate – those who used the least water paid the most per unit of water; those who used more paid a little less; those who used a lot paid the least; and
 - Customers who used less than a minimum number of units of water still paid for a minimum amount of usage.
- As part of the October 11 rollout of billing changes, the Rate Structure was changed:
 - A flat rate structure was established, with all customers paying the same per unit of water, no matter how much or how little is used;
 - No more minimum usage charge for water – customers pay only for the amount of water they use;
 - Two fixed charges : one for an Account Management Fee and an Infrastructure charge based on meter size; and
 - Even with the recent rate increase, customers who are the lowest users of water should see their costs go down.



Assisting those in need - Seniors

Low Income Senior Citizens Water Discount:

Provides a 43% discount on water/sewer rates for eligible senior citizens age 65 or older who are City residents and whose household income does not exceed \$30,000

Historical Participation

	Participants	Total Benefits Provided
FY 2016	2,777	\$585,298
FY 2015	2,645	\$567,987
FY 2014	2,374	\$421,544
FY 2013	2,121	\$294,832
FY 2012	2,149	\$244,971
FY 2011	2,273	\$220,630
FY 2010	2,601	\$247,865



Assisting those in need - Grants

Low Income Water Assistance Program:

Provides a credit of \$197 toward a down payment to customers at the point of delinquent notice and who wish to enter into a payment plan

Historical Participation

	Participants	Total Benefits Provided
FY 2016	1,992	\$356,246
FY 2015	2,433	\$390,047
FY 2014	1,973	\$277,565
FY 2013	1,461	\$182,750
FY 2012	1,293	\$161,625
FY 2011	1,998	\$249,875
FY 2010	1,836	\$227,155



Assisting those in need - Exemptions

- A Hardship Exemption Program is also available to eligible customers, exempting them from paying the Stormwater Remediation Fee and the Bay Restoration Fee.
- To be eligible, the customer must meet at least two of the following criteria:
 - Receiving energy assistance subsidy
 - Receiving public assistance – Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or food stamps, and medical assistance
 - Receiving veterans, social security, or social security benefits
 - Meeting the gross income criteria for the Maryland Dept. of Human Resources/Office of Home Energy Programs
- Currently have 3,180 customers receiving this assistance



Payment Plans for Delinquent Accounts

- Payment plans are offered to our customers to help them get their accounts back in order.
- The traditional payment plan requires a 50% down payment with the remaining balance spread out in equal payments over 12 months.
- A new payment plan option is being offered that requires no down payment, with the amount owed spread out in equal payments over 6 months.
- Customers who receive the Senior Citizen Discount will not have to pay a down payment for a payment plan.
- The new monthly bill format will show the amount of the monthly payment plan owed right on the water bill.

