Helpful Information
for new water customers
# Table of Contents

- **Introduction** .................................................. Page 3
- **Paying Your Water Bill** ..................................... Page 5
- **Water & Sewer Service FAQs** .......................... Page 7
- **Water Leak & Water Meter Information** ................. Page 9
- **Water & Sewer Maintenance Responsibility** ............ Page 10
- **Water Quality FAQs** ........................................ Page 11
- **Cross Connection & Backflow Prevention** ............... Page 12
- **Community Outreach** ........................................ Page 13

---

## Our Vision, Mission, and Values

**Vision**

Improve the quality of life through our environmental services

**Mission**

We manage water, wastewater, recycling, and solid waste.

**Values**

- Excellence
- Innovation
- Commitment
- Teamwork
- Mutual Respect
- Integrity
Welcome to Montgomery County!

Whether you are a new, continuing, or returning customer, we hope the following information will be helpful. Our job is to serve you and we take it seriously. Montgomery County Environmental Services is operated under the Board of County Commissioners (BCC). All water and sewer services are paid for by the people who use them. Rates are established by the BCC. County tax dollars are not used to support these services.

At Montgomery County Environmental Services, we build a relationship with our customers based on compassion and responsiveness. We deliver the highest quality of services at the best possible value. Customer service is an integral concern in the implementation and development of all our procedures, processes, and policies.

Our Customer Service Standards

1. We put our customers first. They deserve nothing less.
2. We respond to customers promptly with courtesy and respect.
3. We are dedicated to providing service in a proactive, flexible, and efficient manner.
4. We recognize that the quality of our performance directly impacts our customers.
5. We establish clear and concise delivery standards and timelines.
6. We personally identify ourselves to customers during visits and meetings, and on the telephone.
7. We use information technology systems to support internal operations and provide customers with service options.
8. We provide regular feedback to customers on the status of projects and requests.
9. We continuously evaluate internal processes to improve performance and enhance staff skills.
10. We solicit constructive feedback through surveys, interviews, and evaluations.
Customer Service Phone Numbers

Water & Sewer Billing: (937) 781-2688
Water Quality Concerns: (937) 781-2678
Maintenance & Repairs: (937) 781-2678
Emergency / After Hours: (937) 781-2678
Education & Community Outreach: (937) 781-2532

Water Services Administration Building
1850 Spaulding Road
Dayton, OH 45432
Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday

Visit us online at www.mcohio.org/water.
For fun games and educational information, visit www.deweyandsplash.com or www.mcswd.org.
Paying Your Water Bill

Pay Online
You can pay your bill online at www.mcohio.org/water, using a credit card or electronic check payment. (All returned check fees apply.)

On your first visit to the website, you will need your account number and the cycle/route, which are printed on your bill. This will allow you to set up a PIN (personal identification number). For future visits, you will need your account number and PIN. This website also has information about how much you owe, your past payment history, and your past water usage.

Pay by telephone
Credit card payments are accepted by telephone at (937) 781-2688. Have your credit card available and your bill.

Pay by Mail
A return envelope is provided with your water bill. Please include the payment stub. Allow adequate time for postal delays. Payments are posted on the date they are received and not the postage date on the envelope.

Follow these suggestions:
- Do not tape, staple, or paper clip bills or checks.
- Do not send cash in the mail.
- Do not write on the front of the payment stub. If the scan line is written over, your payment processing will be delayed.
- If you have comments or questions that you would like to include with your payment, please use a separate piece of paper. Notes or messages written on the back of the payment stub may be overlooked.

Pay in Person
Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday
Montgomery County Administration Building Lobby
451 West Third Street
Dayton, OH 45422

Montgomery County Environmental Services Administration Building
1850 Spaulding Road
Dayton, OH 45432

Set up AutoPay!
AutoPay is a safe, convenient, and confidential way to pay your recurring bills.
To get more information or to sign up, log on to our website at www.mcohio.org/water.
Paying Your Water Bill

Pay at a Deposit Box
Payments may be made 24 hours a day at one of our convenient payment drop boxes, located throughout Montgomery County. Do not deposit cash. Please allow at least three days for processing when you pay using a drop box location. Payments received after the due date will be assessed a penalty for late payment.

Drop box locations can be found at:

- Montgomery County Administration Building
  451 West Third Street
  In front of the Administration Building on Third Street

- Montgomery County Environmental Services Administration Building
  1850 Spaulding Road
  In the round landscaped area near the flag poles

- Harrison Township Government Center
  5945 North Dixie Drive
  Mail slot

- Centerville Government Center
  100 W. Spring Valley Road
  Drive-up drop box behind Government Center

- Moraine Government Center
  4200 Dryden Road
  Drive-up drop box

Due Dates and Late Fees
Your water bill is issued quarterly and due in full on or before the payment date. Late charges will be added if payments are received after the due date. If you receive a delinquent or shut off notice, and payment is still not received, your service may be discontinued. Additional charges will be assessed to restore your service.

Prepay Options
To help with budgeting, you can pre-pay your bill on a monthly basis. For example, if your average water/sewer bill is $120 each quarter, you have the option of paying by phone or internet $40 each of the first two months of the quarter. The quarterly bill you receive will display the actual meter reading, and you will be billed for the remaining amount that is owed or credited for any overpayment.
**Can I get account information outside of regular business hours?**

Yes, just call (937) 781-2688. You will need to enter your account number. Using this help line, you can get your account balance, bill due date, last payment date, amount of last payment, and other account information. You can also access your account information online at www.mcohio.org/water.

**How often are bills due?**

Water bills are issued quarterly. Payment is due within 21 days of the billing date. To ensure that your payment reaches us on time, we recommend that you allow up to seven days for mailing. After 21 days, bills are considered delinquent and a 10 percent late charge is assessed.

**How often are meters read?**

Meters are read quarterly. Most meters are located in meter pits located outside, so you may not be aware when our meter service professional reads your meter. If your meter is inside, we will need access to your property. If you are not at home, a card will be left for you to fill out. Simply copy the numbers from the meter register and drop the card in the mail, or call in the meter reading to (937) 781-2688.

If we do not have a reading from you within three days, an “estimated” bill will be sent for that quarter. Customers may read their own inside meters for three quarters. At the time of the fourth quarter reading, a notice will be left instructing you to contact our office to make arrangements for us to read the meter.

**What should I do about water service if I am moving?**

Call our office at least 48 hours before you move to schedule a final reading. A final bill will be sent to you at your new address. If you are moving within our service area, we will also set up a new service account in your name at your new location.

**How are my water and sewer bills calculated?**

Water and sewer charges are calculated in units of 100 cubic feet (approximately 750 gallons) of water, which registers through the water meter. This charge, based on consumption, is the base/volume charge. A fixed service charge is the cost for your connection to the water and sewer systems. The service charge is a per day charge based on the number of days in a billing cycle (typically 91 days). Even if your water service is turned off you will be charged this fee. To avoid this fee, your meter must be pulled.

A well field protection fee is also included, which is five cents per 100 cf. This fee is used to fund the Well Field Protection Program, which was designed to counter threats to our water supply and includes land use control zoning, groundwater remediation, and emergency preparedness.

**Why is my bill so high?**

In the summer, water usage often increases. More bathing and more laundry, plus watering lawns and plants, adds up. If you use large amounts of water for lawn care, you may save money on sewer charges by having a separate sprinkling meter installed, which measures the sprinkler volume and subtracts it from the volume charged to your sanitary sewer system. However, property owners must pay for the meter and its installation.

Undetected leaks can also cause your bill to increase. Even the smallest leak can be costly. Check your toilets and other plumbing fixtures, including outside faucets and hose bibs. It may be cost effective to have a plumber inspect your home’s plumbing system.

Make sure we are able to read your meter regularly. Bills are estimated when we are unable to get a direct meter reading. These estimates may be lower than actual water usage, resulting in a higher bill once an actual reading is taken.
What if my home will be vacant for a long time?
Contact us and we will mail your bill to your temporary address. There are fixed fees or service charges that will be due even if there is no water consumption at the property.

If you leave your home during the winter months, take precautions to avoid problems with freezing pipes:
- Turn your water off at the main valve.
- Open kitchen and bathroom plumbing cabinets.
- Leave a key with a friend or neighbor and ask them to periodically check on your house.
- Do not turn off your heat unless your house has been winterized by a professional plumber.

What if I will be out of town when my next bill is due?
If you plan to be away more than three weeks, just call our office at (937) 781-2688. We can send your bill to your temporary address. We are always available to help you choose the best solution.

Do you have special rates for senior citizens?
We have a special payment program for senior citizens, but are unable to offer reduced rates. The Montgomery County water and sewer systems are governed by the Ohio Revised Code, which mandates equal rates to all users.

However, our Designated Senior Citizen Program does provide a customized payment period to correspond to the date of your pension check issuance.

You can avoid late payment fees by contacting our office before your bill is due. Please contact us during regular business hours at (937) 781-2688.

What if I am unable to pay my bill?
We want to offer you the opportunity to responsibly meet your financial obligations over an extended period, so that it is not necessary to default or suffer water service termination. If you are unable to pay your bill on time, call (937) 781-2688 or visit our offices during normal business hours. Please contact us before the bill due date.

Payment plan arrangements may be available based on your past payment history. Payment plans are finalized when an initial payment is made and future payment dates are scheduled to complete the plan. If you are a tenant, the property owner must also sign the payment plan.

What is the hardness of Montgomery County drinking water?
The hardness of our water after lime softening treatment is about 9 grains per gallon. You may still choose to purchase a water softening product, though it is probably unnecessary because Montgomery County already treats and softens your drinking water.

What if I have a question or complaint about my bill?
Contact a customer service representative within the 21-day prompt payment period. You are a valued customer, and our representatives are ready to assist you with fair and reasonable solutions to any problem. Have your account number ready when you call, which will help us serve you more quickly and efficiently.

If you feel you cannot resolve your concern after calling customer service, you may be able to request a hearing by the Board of Appeals. The Board of Appeals is a nonpartisan body that reviews customer concerns and makes final determinations about disputes. Before proceeding with the appeal process, please ensure that you have first contacted Customer Service at (937) 781-2688 to address your concerns.
Water Leak & Water Meter Information

Dripping faucets and leaking toilets account for as much as 14 percent all indoor water use, which is equivalent to 10 gallons of water loss per day. That water loss can cost you hundreds of dollars on your water bill. Learn how to check for leaks and prevent an unexpectedly high water bill.

How to Check for Leaks

- **Read your water meter.** Use your water meter to check for leaks in your home. Start by turning off all faucets and water-using appliances, and make sure no one uses water during the testing period. Take a reading on your water meter, wait for about 30 minutes, and then take a second reading. If the dial has moved, you have a leak.

- **Check for leaky toilets:** The most common source of a leak is the toilet. On average, 20 percent of toilets leak. Check toilets for leaks by placing a few drops of food coloring in the tank. After 15 minutes, check the toilet bowl to see if the dye is visible. If the dye shows up in the bowl, the toilet has a leak. Leaky toilets can usually be repaired inexpensively by replacing the flapper.

- **Check for leaky faucets.** The next place to check for leaks is your sink and bathtub faucets. One slow dripping faucet can waste up to 20 gallons of water per day. Replacing the rubber O-ring or washer inside the valve will usually repair dripping faucets.

- **Inspect the hose on your washing machine.** You can check for leaks near the floor with paper towels. Warping floors may signal a hidden leak. Also, check other water-using appliances such as water heaters, humidifiers, and furnaces.

Water Meter Information

**Property Owner Responsibility**
The meter pit and curb box belong to and are the maintenance responsibility of the property owner. The meter pit is an underground structure where the water meter is located. It is covered with a lid marked “WATER METER.” The curb box is the service line shut off valve on your property, and it will be marked “WATER” on the lid.

**Water Meter Access**
Water meters should be clearly visible and free of any overgrowth, bushes, or trees that may be blocking access to the meter. This enables our meter service professionals to obtain the meter reading easily and safely. Inside meters must also to be kept accessible and the area where they are located should be clutter-free.

**Safety Considerations**

- **County Identification:** All Montgomery County employees carry a county issued photo ID. Meter and field service professionals will be in uniform. County vehicles are identified with the county logo. Our field personnel will never accept cash for repairs or a water bill.

- **Dogs:** Please secure your pet indoors. If we must enter your home to read a meter, you will be asked to secure your pet in another room. Experience indicates that this is the best policy.

- **Snow and Ice:** Please keep walkways and access areas free of snow and ice. Help us ensure the safety of our field personnel and avoid costly employee injuries.
**County Maintenance Responsibility**

Montgomery County Environmental Services is responsible for the installation, inspection, and maintenance of more than 1,330 miles of water lines, approximately 11,500 fire hydrants, and 14 water tanks and reservoirs. We also treat 21 million gallons of sewage per day, which equals 9.5 billion gallons per year.

The county is responsible for the water infrastructure from the water mainlines to the curb stop. If a break occurs in this area, we will repair it at no cost to the property owner. The county is also responsible for the sewer mainlines. If a blockage or break occurs in the sewer mainlines, we will repair it at no cost to the property owner. However, if a property owner is found to be illegally discharging hazardous materials (fat, grease, motor oil, or other hazardous chemicals) into the sanitary sewer system, then the property owner could be held financially and legally responsible for any resulting repairs and damages.

Call us at (937) 781-2678 if your water service is interrupted because of a water mainline break or other leak beyond the curb stop, or if your sanitary sewer service is interrupted because of a sewer mainline problem.

**Customer Maintenance Responsibility**

The property owner is responsible for maintaining water service from the curb stop to the home or business, including the installation and maintenance of service piping into the building, inside and outside plumbing and fixtures, and adequate protection for water meters against freezing or other damage. If a break occurs in this area, repairs will be the responsibility of the property owner.

In addition, the property owner is responsible for maintaining sewer service from the county mainline sanitary sewer to the home or business. If a sewer blockage or break occurs in this area, repairs will be the responsibility of the property owner.

*See the diagram below for more information about maintenance responsibilities.*
We are proud that Montgomery County repeatedly meets and surpasses all federal and state standards for drinking water quality. We embrace our role as water stewards, and we are dedicated to providing our customers with a safe and reliable drinking water supply.

As a water customer of Montgomery County, you will receive a Drinking Water Quality Report each year. This report describes our treatment process and drinking quality testing results in great detail, and provides educational and community resources for our customers. You can also view or download the latest Drinking Water Quality Report from www.mcohio.org/water.

What is the hardness of Montgomery County water?
Elements that contribute to water hardness are calcium and magnesium. Our water hardness is about nine grains per gallon (150 parts per million) after lime softening treatment.

Should I buy a home softening system?
Before you decide to buy a home softening system, keep in mind that our water is already softened. The lime softening process removes most of the hardness in our water, reducing it from 20 grains per gallon (raw water) to about nine grains per gallon (finished water). The water is also engineered to be noncorrosive. This helps prevent unsafe levels of lead and copper from leaching into the water from home plumbing. Home softening systems can further reduce water hardness, usually by replacing it with a small amount of sodium, but are probably unnecessary if you are a Montgomery County water customer.

Should I have a home filtration system?
Because Montgomery County’s water surpasses all federal and state standards, home filtration systems are not necessary. However, if you choose to purchase a filtration system, keep the following tips in mind:

- Choose a system that addresses your specific concerns. Find out if the type of system you are considering is capable or removing substances that concern you.
- Look for filters that have been certified by the National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) and Underwriters Laboratory (UL).
- Follow the manufacturer’s maintenance instructions carefully. When not properly maintained and serviced, filtration systems may harbor disease-causing bacteria, which may cause illness.

Water Quality FAQs
Montgomery County takes pride in delivering quality water to our community. Although the water that reaches your home or business is pure and clean, contamination may occur within your own piping system. This potential contamination hazard is known as a cross-connection, and it is an important health concern.

Congress established the Safe Drinking Water Act in 1974 to protect human health from contaminants in drinking water and to prevent contamination of existing groundwater supplies. This act and its amendments require many actions to protect drinking water and its sources. One of these actions is the installation and maintenance of an approved backflow prevention assembly at the water service connection wherever a potential hazard is determined to exist in the customer’s system. Without proper protection, cross-connection may occur.

Montgomery County’s goal is to identify potential cross-connection hazards throughout our water systems, and then take appropriate action to protect against them. But we need your help. As a water customer, you are the most familiar with how water is being used at your property.

What is a cross-connection?
A cross-connection is a connection between a drinking water (potable) source or system and an unapproved water source or system (non-potable). With a cross-connection, your drinking water may become contaminated when a backflow condition occurs. Some common cross-connections found in plumbing and water systems include:

- Wash basins and service sinks
- Hose bibs
- Irrigation sprinkler systems
- Fire sprinkler systems

Cross-connection hazards should be identified and evaluated, so that the appropriate type of backflow protection can be used to protect your drinking water supply. Most cross-connections will need to be controlled through the installation of an approved mechanical backflow prevention device.

What is a backflow?
Backflow is the unwanted flow of contaminants or non-potable water back into the consumer’s plumbing system and/or the public water system. There are two situations that can cause a backflow: (1) backpressure, where the pressure in your pipes is greater than the pressure coming in; or (2) backsiphonage, which is a negative pressure in one of the pipes.

Hose bibs allow us to hook up a garden hose to water the plants, wash the car, cleanout the gutters, or fill the kid’s pool. Remember that every time you connect a garden hose you are extending the water line. To make sure that no harmful materials are drawn back into your garden hose and our water supply system, a vacuum breaker should be installed on each hose bib.

Business Owners
If you own a business of any kind and currently do not have backflow prevention in place, please contact us at (937) 781-2628 to have the situation on your property evaluated for cross-connection and backflow prevention measures.
Community Outreach

- **Visit our interactive website** at www.deweyandsplash.com for fun games and educational resources for young children.
- **Schedule a learning program** for your classroom or summer camp. We provide fun, interactive, age appropriate programs.
- **Ask our experts** for hydrologic cycle illustrations or enviroscape demonstrations.
- **Take a tour** of our Wastewater Treatment Plant or Environmental Laboratory to see how water is processed and treated to make it safe for human consumption and the environment.
- **Schedule guest speakers.** We are happy to give Career Day presentations, or provide expert speakers for educational presentations, conferences, and other events.
- **Gain valuable career experience.** We offer co-op and internship opportunities in the engineering and IT fields.
- **Meet Dewey & Splash,** our mascots, who are happy to attend fairs, festivals, and other community events.
- **All these services are offered completely free of charge!**

For more information, contact Brianna Wooten at (937) 781-2532 or wootenb@mcohio.org.

Check Out These Great Online Resources!

- Ohio Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.state.oh.us
- The United States Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov
- The Miami Conservancy District: www.miamiconservancy.org
- Miami Soil and Water Conservation District: www.mamiswcd.org
- American Water Works Associations: www.awwa.org
- The Rural Community Assistance Partnership: www.rcap.org
Our Vision:
Improve the quality for life through our environmental services