

## Drinking Water

- Drinking water facilities that serve over a certain number of individuals are classified as public systems.
- These systems must follow rules set forth by the state and federal government.
- The federal government requires that public water systems have skilled specialists running them to ensure the water at your house is safe to drink.

## Wastewater

- Wastewater is dirty water that leaves your house through drains, clothes washers, dishwashers, and when you flush the toilet.
- This water travels to a collection facility where it is treated.
- Wastewater facilities that treat over 2,500 gallons per day are classified as public and are subject to state and federal rules.
- Wastewater facilities require skilled specialists to run them and make sure your waste is handled in a sanitary way.

## Utility Bills

### Why do you have to pay a utility bill?

Daily operation of your public utilities takes money. Pumping drinking water and wastewater through the pipes requires electric power. It costs money to replace parts that break or get too old to work. Public utilities are required by law to take many expensive samples each month. They also must pay the employees that run them, as well as cover administrative costs.

Excess snow and ice, wildfires, droughts, drinking water contamination, and pipe breaks are some examples of events that can cost your utility a lot of money to repair.

**You pay a bill so that you can enjoy safe drinking water at your home and be able to flush your toilet.**

### Why do bills go up?

**One of the biggest causes of rate increases is improper behavior from community residents.** People often unknowingly damage their public utilities or take advantage of their services. Then the utility must spend money in order to fix the damage, or they must raise rates in order to recover costs.

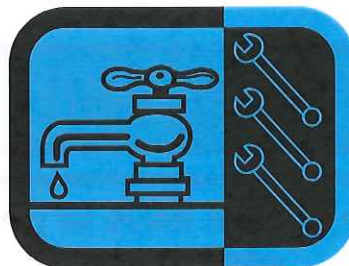
The fees for electricity are always increasing. Since utilities are generally non-profits, this cost must be passed on to the customer. The standards set by the EPA are often changing, which requires utilities to undergo expensive upgrades to remain in compliance.



## What Can You Do?

### **Treat your utility nicely in order to avoid paying a higher bill!**

- Do not flush hair down your drain! Buy an inexpensive drain protector for your bathtubs and sinks to collect hairs.
- Do not dump grease, oil, or fat down the sink! Instead, pour grease and fat into a jar and throw it away in the trash.
- Do not flush baby wipes, diapers, tampons, condoms, or anything else besides toilet paper down the toilet! Even if something says "flushable," it does not break apart the way toilet paper does.
- Be mindful of water use. Overuse can cause rates to rise! Water your lawn wisely and conserve at home.
- Dispose of chemicals and prescriptions properly.



For more information on public utilities, visit these websites:

[Deq.idaho.gov](http://Deq.idaho.gov)

[Healthandwelfare.idaho.gov](http://Healthandwelfare.idaho.gov)

[Idahoruralwater.com](http://Idahoruralwater.com)

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## Understanding Your

# Public

# Utilities



## A guide to drinking water and wastewater