

TOWN OF PLYMOUTH
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY
OFFICE AND BILLING POLICY



SECTION I
INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to develop proper written procedures in the daily operation and function of the WPCA office. The WPCA operates under Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) set forth in Chapter 103, Sections 7-245 through 7-273a, WPCA Rules and Regulations Ordinance revised and adopted March 31, 1986, effective June 12, 1986, and/or any other regulations that may apply.

One main function of the WPCA is to set and collect fair and reasonable fees for all users connected to the sewerage system in order to operate and maintain the treatment facility, collection system, including pumping stations, and the administrative office dealing with all budgetary items. All funds collected by the WPCA shall be kept separately from other town funds.

Another important part of the WPCA office policy is to establish Rules and Regulations that govern how the WPCA operates not only in the day to day operations within the department but also setting the policy for new and current users of the sewerage system.

Other WPCA income is collected from interest on delinquent sewer use fees, sewer line assessments, benefit connections, connection/disconnection permits, septic tank disposals and waste from recreational vehicles.

The WPCA holds a yearly public hearing to allow all users of the sewerage system to be heard relative to any changes in fees (e.g. sewer use, connection, reconnection, permit fees (connect/reconnect/disconnect) and mobile recreational vehicles) including rule and regulation changes.

A copy of all Public Hearing notices, including changes and amendments, as they apply, are filed in the Plymouth Town Clerk's office.

The sewer use fee system in the Town of Plymouth complies with C.G.S. Chapter 103 "Municipal Sewerage Systems" and Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) regulation 22a-482-3(e) User Charge System Section 1, User Charge System Based on Actual Use (or Estimated Use).

SECTION II
THE WPCA BILLING CYCLE

The annual sewer user fee for residential, commercial, industrial and municipal accounts are billed for the timeframe October 1st through September 30th which represents the prior year's use.

The sewer use fee for new connections will be billed once the dwelling structure is directly connected to the Town's sewerage system. This is considered benefit of use regardless of whether other utilities have been installed. The first sewer use bill may be prorated contingent on the connection date.

Sewer use bills are mailed to the property owner of record as listed on the Town of Plymouth Tax Assessor Records and/or property deed filed in the Plymouth Town Clerk's office. The WPCA office shall not make any name or address changes until the proper real estate paperwork is filed with the Plymouth Town Clerk and/or Tax Assessor.

The minimum sewer user fee charged shall be one (1) unit.

OFFICE AND BILLING POLICY ADOPTED AT WPCA MEETING – 6/20/16

SECTION II - continued
THE WPCA BILLING CYCLE - continued

The property owner is responsible to ensure the sewer use fee is paid when due. Failure to receive a sewer use bill does not exempt the property owner from payment including interest for late fees and sewer lien fees. This is governed by section 12-130 of the C.G.S.

The purchase or sale of a property during the billing timeframe (October 1 through September 30) which results in sewer use fees owed to the WPCA which were not addressed or adjusted at the property closing, will be the responsibility of the new owner.

SECTION III
INTEREST ON LATE PAYMENTS / LIEN FEES

Any charge for connection with or for the use of the sewerage system not paid within thirty days of the due date, is considered delinquent and 1 ½ percent interest is added for each month the account remains delinquent; 18% annually. Any such unpaid sewer connection or sewer use charge shall constitute a lien upon the real estate against which such charge was levied from the date it became delinquent. This is governed by C.G.S. section 7-258 and C.G.S. section 12-146.

If a sewer use account is more than one (1) year delinquent, any payments made will be applied to the oldest bill, with payments applied to interest first and sewer use fees second.

Currently a Sewer Lien is filed on a delinquent sewer use account by the Plymouth Tax Collector the last business day of September each year.

Payments are made directly to the Town of Plymouth Tax office. No payments will be accepted at the WPCA treatment facility.

SECTION IV
SIGNING OFF FOR BUILDING PERMITS FOR RESIDENTS OR CONTRACTORS

Before an Inland/Wetlands & Conservation, Planning and Zoning, and/or Building department permit can be issued, the resident or contractor must obtain a sign off from each department within the Town of Plymouth. In the case of the WPCA, the applicant will only receive a sign off if the property owner does not owe any outstanding sewer use fees and/or connection/permit fees due on the property for which the permit is being issued. The outstanding fees must be paid in full. The WPCA reserves the right to waive this policy for emergency and/or hardship cases to be determined by the WPCA.

SECTION V

REDUCTION OR CANCELLATION OF SEWER USE FEES AND CHARGES / INTEREST AND LIENS

Vacant dwelling units in "grandfathered" multi-family buildings: This policy provides that the sewer use fee on dwelling units in multi-family buildings which are vacant for at least one (1) year may be reduced by fifty (50) percent upon written request by the property owner, verification of vacancy by the Town Building Official and approval by the WPCA. Eligibility is limited to properties "grandfathered" under the same ownership since adoption of this policy dated June 26, 1995. Transfer or sale of the property to a new owner eliminates eligibility for this reduction. Once all remaining "grandfathered" properties are eliminated, this policy is terminated

User fee reduction for condemned properties: This policy provides that properties condemned by the Town of Plymouth Building Official as unfit for occupancy due to fire, blight or other hazardous physical conditions, are eligible for a reduction in sewer use fees upon written request by the property owner, written verification of condemnation by the Plymouth Building Official, and final approval by the WPCA. The WPCA may impose further policy as to the timeframe and other stipulations related to the condemned property.

The sewer use fee will be eliminated from a property if the sewer lateral connection for the property is excavated outside the dwelling and the sewer lateral line is permanently disconnected. A disconnection permit shall be obtained from the WPCA office by a licensed plumber and the disconnection shall be inspected by WPCA staff. Any outstanding sewer use fees are due and payable at the time the disconnection permit is issued.

Reduction of Billable Unit/Sewer Use Fees: Unless an obvious clerical error occurs, no billable unit or sewer use fee shall be reduced or eliminated until an inspection has been completed by the Plymouth Building Official and/or Plymouth Assessor and the proper paper work has been filed with the WPCA Office stating the reason for eliminating the sewer use fee billable unit. The WPCA shall review, on a case by case basis, to approve or deny the elimination of the billable unit.

Reduction or Cancellation of Sewer Account Interest and Lien Fees: Unless an obvious clerical error occurs or is justified through legal action, the WPCA shall not have the authority to reduce or cancel delinquent interest or lien fees with regards to connection with or sewer use accounts.

The WPCA shall not give credits towards or reduction to the yearly user fee for temporary absences, such as vacations or taking up residence in other areas during the billing cycle.

Section V Is hereby revised from "POLICY REGARDING AND WAIVER OR CANCELLATION OF SEWER USER FEE AND CHARGES" Adopted June 16, 2003.

SECTION VI

SEWER PERMITS / FEES:

Any time an excavation is to be made regarding a sewer line or, lateral house connection, a sewer permit must be obtained from the WPCA office. (Cost of permit fee will be the price in effect at the time the permit is issued).

SECTION VI - continued
SEWER PERMITS / FEES – continued

Once the permit is issued, it is valid for thirty (30) days. If the work is not completed on or within the thirty (30) day period, the permit will be considered void and a new permit and fee shall be required before the work is performed. (Reference Sewer Connection Policy dated May 17, 1999, revised April 27, 2015)

Assessment /Connection Fee: If the sewer work to be performed requires an assessment or connection fee, the fee is due and payable at the same time the sewer permit is issued. These fees shall be determined by the WPCA. (Reference Sewer Connection Policy dated May 17, 1999, revised April 27, 2015)

If a property owner requests to install additional connections to an existing sewer lateral on private property, and/or installs a new separate lateral from the sewer main into the property, an additional sewer connection permit and connection fee for each additional connection shall be charged. Cost of sewer permit fee and connection fee will be the fee in effect at the time the permit is issued.

Each additional connection shall be defined as a new unit and will be billed an additional sewer use fee at the rate set at the time of the connection.

Illegal Connections to the Town's sewer system: If the WPCA is notified and determines a property has connected illegally to the Town sewer sewerage system, the property owner shall pay a connection permit fee in addition to a minimum one full year sewer use fee. If it is proven the property was connected for a longer period of time, additional yearly sewer use fees shall be added for that timeframe.

If the WPCA determines the property shall be disconnected at the property owner's expense, a disconnection permit shall be obtained by a licensed plumber and the disconnect shall be inspected by the WPCA staff. The cost of the connection permit fee and sewer use fee shall not be refunded.

If the WPCA determines the connection can remain in use, the property owner shall pay a sewer connection fee. The WPCA reserves the right, at the property owner's expense, to have the sewer line exposed by a licensed plumber for inspection by WPCA staff and/or televise the inside of the line from the dwelling to the main line sewer.

Language not specifically spelled out in this office and billing policy will revert back to existing WPCA Rules and Regulations, C.G.S. or any other Regulations that shall apply.

SECTION VII
PLYMOUTH USER FEE DEFINITIONS:

These definitions shall be in addition to those adopted from a Public Hearing dated June 17, 2013 and filed in the Plymouth Town Clerk's office July 10, 2013.

Sewer Use Fee Structure: At the present time, the WPCA defines a billable unit by flow using a set fixed flat rate amount of 52,000 gallons per unit. Residential units are billed the flat rate fee due to a large number of residential properties connected to the sewerage system utilize well water versus city water where metering is provided.

SECTION VII - continued

PLYMOUTH USER FEE DEFINITIONS - continued

All commercial, industrial and municipal accounts are calculated from actual water consumption recorded from water readings supplied by Connecticut Water Company on annual basis. The total metered yearly use is divided by the flat rate fee of 52,000 gallons which equals the amount of billable flow units.

Billable Unit: Shall mean any building, structure, dwelling, house, garage, detached or any out building on the same property that have any type of plumbing fixtures that are connected directly or indirectly into the Town of Plymouth sewerage system. Each individual unit within a building, structure, dwelling, house, garage, detached or any out building on the same property that has plumbing fixtures that are connected directly or indirectly into the Town sewerage system shall be a billable unit.

Non Billable Unit: Shall mean any building, structure, dwelling, house garage, detached or any out building on the same property that is not connected to the Town Sewerage system.

OFFICE AND BILLING POLICY ADOPTED AT WPCA MEETING 6/20/16.