



New Utility Billing System Questions and Answers

Why did the City change to a new utility billing system?

The City's prior billing system, installed in 1996, was outdated, cumbersome to use, and limited the City's ability to automate processes. In June 2010, the City transitioned to a new utility billing system that provides for streamlined processes and increased efficiencies, which ultimately translates to better service for our customers.

What did the City have to do to transition to the new system?

In order to launch the new system, the City had to transition from the old system to the new one. As a result, the City had to completely shut down the old system at the end of the monthly billing cycle and temporarily suspend the billing process. To prepare for this transition, in May, the City read meters earlier in the month for a limited number of accounts that are usually billed at the end of the month. These customers received a bill in May that was less than normal because of the shorter billing cycle. The June billing cycle for these customers was returned to the normal time frame to get the billing cycles back on track, which in some cases extended the June cycle up to 39 days. Beginning in July, all customers will resume their normal 28 to 33 day billing cycles.

Has anything about my utility billing account changed as a result of the new billing system?

Yes. You have been assigned a new account number.

Do I need to do anything as a result of being assigned a new account number?

Yes. If you pay your utility bill using your bank's online bill payment system, you will need to edit the payee information on your bank's web site by replacing your old account number with your new account number to ensure your bill is paid.

If you pay your bill online via the City of Fort Lauderdale's web site at www.fortlauderdale.gov/utilitybilling, you will need to create a new login profile using your new account number.

If you do not yet have your new account number, please contact a Utility Billing customer service representative at 954-828-5150. For after-hours assistance, please contact the 24-hour Customer Service Center at 954-828-8000.

Will the information on my utility bill change?

No. The information provided on your utility bill will not change, but the look of your bill has changed. The new format provides a more organized, detailed view of your services and charges, and now includes a new 12-month water consumption graph that offers a visual description of the amount of water used to assist with water conservation efforts and budgeting.

Will my billing period change?

No. Your billing period will not change. However, the billing cycle for a limited number of accounts may have been impacted by the transition to the new system. This means your billing cycle may have been extended past the normal 28 to 33 days. However, in July, all customers will resume their normal billing cycles.

Will the day the City reads my meter change?

No. The day the City reads your meter will not change. The City will continue its existing calendar for meter reading. Meter reading days fluctuate between one to three days depending on the month.

Is there any change to my sanitation schedule?

No. There is no change to your sanitation services schedule.

Can I still pay my utility bill online?

Yes. To pay your bill online, visit the City of Fort Lauderdale's web site at www.fortlauderdale.gov/utilitybilling. But remember, if you pay your bill online via the City's web site, you will need to create a new login profile using your new account number if you have not already done so.

Another new feature of the upgraded utility billing system is the Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system, which the City expects to launch this fall. IVR will offer customers another convenient option to pay their utility bill, as they will be able to pay their utility bill by telephone.

Can I set up Automatic Bill Payment (Direct Payment)?

Yes. Customers may sign up for Automatic Bill Payment (Direct Payment), which is an efficient electronic payment alternative to paper checks. Customers who sign up for this service authorize the City to electronically collect a pre-authorized amount from their checking or savings account to pay their utility bill. Instead of writing a check every month, your bank will automatically make the payment on the due date of your bill. To sign up for automatic bill payment, visit www.fortlauderdale.gov/utilitybilling or contact a Utility Billing customer service representative at 954-828-5150. For after-hours assistance, please contact the 24-hour Customer Service Center at 954-828-8000.

Does the new system offer any other new features?

Yes. The City is pleased to offer e-billing, which is an electronic bill that can only be viewed online. E-billing is not only easy and efficient; it is eco-friendly because it replaces the paper bill that customers receive in the mail. To sign up for e-billing or for more information, visit www.fortlauderdale.gov/utilitybilling or contact a Utility Billing customer service representative at 954-828-5150. For after-hours assistance, please contact the 24-hour Customer Service Center at 954-828-8000.

How much did the new utility billing system cost?

The contract for the new utility billing system, which was approved by the City Commission on July 1, 2008, was \$2,150,349. This contract was secured based on a formal bid process and the ranking of seven requests for proposals received through the City's Procurement Department

Will my rates increase to pay for the new utility billing system?

No. Your rates will not be affected by the implementation of the new utility billing system. The cost for implementation of the utility billing system was budgeted in the City's Capital Improvement Plan.

Are any future rate increases planned?

In June 2009, the City Commission approved an overall rate restructuring in response to the findings of a study prepared by our financial rate consultant. This restructuring provided for a five percent rate increase across the board for water, sewer, and stormwater service. The rate increase will be effective August 1, 2010, and it is unrelated to the new billing system. The City of Fort Lauderdale's utility rates remain among the lowest in Broward County.

How can I receive more information about the new utility billing system?

For more information about utility billing, please visit the City's web site at www.fortlauderdale.gov/utilitybilling. You may also contact a Utility Billing customer service representative during regular business hours at 954-828-5150. For after-hours assistance, please contact the 24-hour Customer Service Center at 954-828-8000. If you prefer the convenience of the Internet, you may log on to the City's web site at www.fortlauderdale.gov/customerservice and complete the customer service web form.