

STOP

PLEASE READ: Important rate information for residential customers

The Coachella Valley Water District's (CVWD) Board of Directors has approved a new water budget-based tiered rate structure to promote water conservation and efficient irrigation practices. The new structure will apply to all single-family residential and dedicated landscape customers, effective with the May bills (for the prior month's usage). Other types of domestic water users will be phased into the new structure at later dates.

Why tiered rates? The goal is to promote water conservation and efficient irrigation practices. Tiered rates have been used by water districts throughout the country, especially in the southwest, for this reason with successful results. We expect to see 20% overall reduction in water use.

CVWD's Board of Directors approved the new rate structure following an extensive public outreach campaign that included the formation of a Tiered Rate Advisory Committee, representing various interests throughout the Coachella Valley.

Water budgets explained: Every customer will be given an individualized "water budget" each month, representing a reasonable and attainable water allocation for indoor and outdoor needs. Only water use that exceeds the water budget will be charged at a higher rate.

Your monthly water budget is listed at the top of the left column of information on your water bill. Water budgets are scientifically calculated based on:

1. Lot size and percentage of lot irrigated (allowing larger properties with larger landscaped areas to receive a higher water budget).
2. Daily observed weather (allowing higher water budgets in the hotter months).

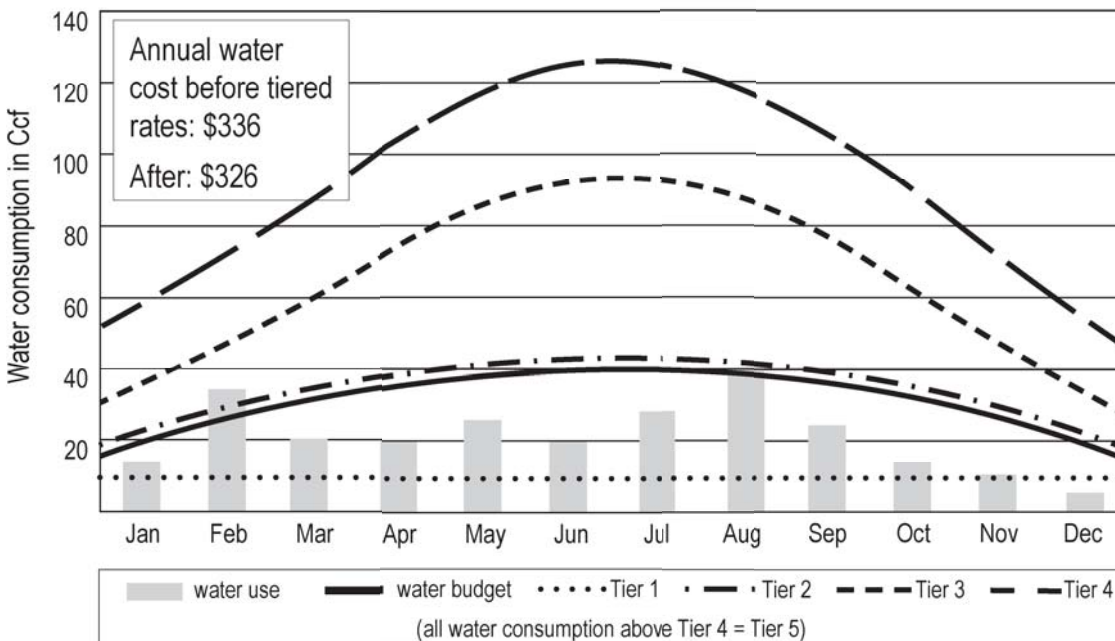
3. Number of people in the home (all customers are given a default of four people per home). Because Coachella Valley residents typically use 70%-75% of their water outside the home, this factor has the least effect on the water budget.

The new water budget-based structure is shown here.

Tier	Water use	Cost
Tier 1 — <i>Excellent</i>	Up to 10 Ccf*	90% base rate
Tier 2 — <i>Efficient</i>	Up to 105% water budget	base rate**
Tier 3 — <i>Inefficient</i>	105% up to 150%	1.5x base rate
Tier 4 — <i>Excessive</i>	150% up to 250%	2x base rate
Tier 5 — <i>Wasteful</i>	250% or more	4x base rate

* 1 Ccf = 100 cubic feet or 748 gallons; monthly bills indicate water use in measurements of Ccf.

** Most CVWD customers currently pay a base rate of 103¢ per Ccf; Customers living in Sky Valley and Indio Hills pay \$1.26; customers in east Salton Sea area pay \$1.55; customers in west Salton Sea area pay \$1.33. Higher rates are due to increased costs of providing service to outlying areas.



How does it work?

Here is a sample of an average customer's 2008 water use. Note, this customer met his water budget 11 months out of the year for an annual water bill savings of \$10.

Construction of a new pool in February resulted in his highest water use for the year. However, that was offset by rain in December that allowed him to turn his sprinklers off most of the month and keep his water use within the first tier.

Your water use will be charted this way each month on your bill.

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For the next three months, your new water bill will show both the total amount due, based on the current rate structure (highlighted in yellow), and an advance notice of the amount you *would* owe under the new rate structure (above the bar chart). The new structure goes into effect with the May bills (for prior month's usage). Until then, please pay only the total amount due.

Will my monthly water bill go down with the new rate structure? Based on current water use, 70% of residential customers will see a decrease or no change in their water bill. If you fix leaks and reduce irrigation times in the cooler months, you will likely pay the same or less under the new structure than you are paying now. Those with desert-friendly landscaping are the most likely to see a decrease in their bill.

Will my monthly water bill increase with the new rate structure? Some residential customers will see an increase in their water bill, mostly due to inefficient irrigation practices or leaks. However, water budgets allow enough outdoor water use to keep a grass lawn healthy so you have the option of cutting back water use to the base rate without jeopardizing your lawn.

To reduce your water use, consider these tips:

- ✓ Change your irrigation time monthly to reflect the change in weather or purchase a "smart controller" which adjusts daily. For more information about CVWD's smart controller program, visit www.cvwd.org or call (760) 391-9600.
- ✓ Turn off sprinklers when it rains.
- ✓ Fix leaks immediately. To determine whether you have a leak, turn off all water-using items and check your water meter, usually located in your front yard (be careful of creatures hiding inside). If the dial is turning, despite everything being turned off, you have a leak.
- ✓ Consider replacing a portion of your grass lawn with water-efficient landscaping on a drip irrigation system.
- ✓ For tips on selecting low water-using plants or converting your lawn, purchase our 160-page guide, *Lush & Efficient Landscape Gardening in the Coachella Valley*.

What if I think my water budget is wrong? Water budgets are scientifically calculated based on lot size, percentage of lot irrigated, daily observed weather and number of people in the home (a default of four unless an appeal is requested).

If you think your water budget is incorrect, CVWD will be happy to re-evaluate your water needs and adjust your budget if appropriate. Our goal is to encourage water conservation and reward efficient irrigation. Call Water Service for an appeals form, or download it from our web site at www.cvwd.org.



Tired of seeing water running down the sidewalks and streets? With tiered rates, this kind of overwatering will cause customers' water bills to increase by as much as four times the normal rate. Hopefully, this will encourage wasters to irrigate more appropriately.

If you're not sure whether you're a waster or not, ask yourself these questions: Do your sprinklers keep water on landscaping or over spray and send water onto hardscapes? When done watering, is your landscape oversaturated, causing puddles on your property? Do you find yourself increasing irrigation time across a large property only to fix a small brown spot?

More detailed information about tiered rates and conservation tips are available at www.cvwd.org or by calling (888) 388-3255.

Para más información en Español, llame al (888) 388-3255.

