

Summer Water Bill Too High? Adjust Your Landscape Watering To Keep It Low

Is your water bill higher than usual? Lawn watering may be the culprit.

This year's rainy spring produced remarkably green lawns. But trying to keep them that way — especially during extended stretches of hot, dry weather — has led to unusually high water use for some homeowners.

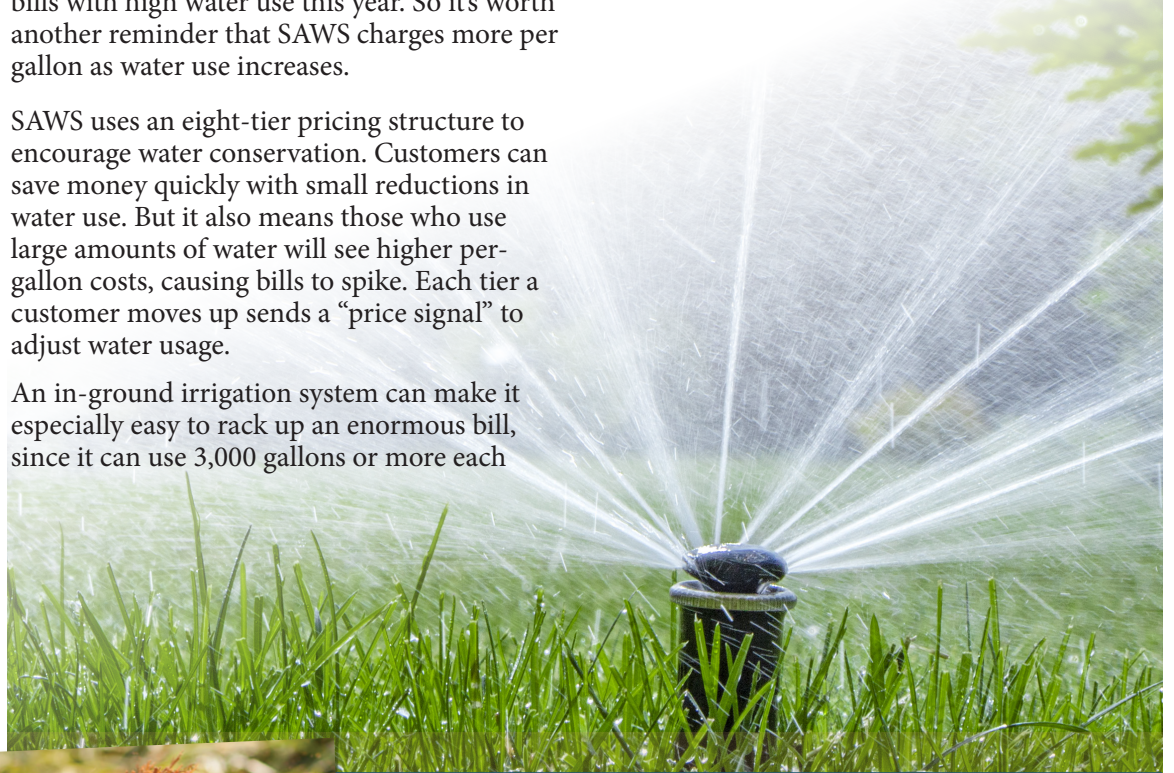
Higher summer water bills are practically an annual occurrence, but SAWS is seeing many bills with high water use this year. So it's worth another reminder that SAWS charges more per gallon as water use increases.

SAWS uses an eight-tier pricing structure to encourage water conservation. Customers can save money quickly with small reductions in water use. But it also means those who use large amounts of water will see higher per-gallon costs, causing bills to spike. Each tier a customer moves up sends a "price signal" to adjust water usage.

An in-ground irrigation system can make it especially easy to rack up an enormous bill, since it can use 3,000 gallons or more each

time it runs. And a system that's not properly programmed or maintained can use even more. As an alternative, you can save a lot of water by hand watering, which you can do any day, at any time — regardless of drought stage restrictions.

Remember to visit GardenStyleSA.com for weekly watering advice and landscaping tips to reduce outdoor water use while still keeping your yard thriving.



Don't Plant — Prep Instead

Summertime, with its scorching heat and sparse rainfall, is not the ideal time to plant — unless you're into cactus and palms.

Instead, the best thing you can do for your parched landscape right now is to re-evaluate it and prep it for autumn planting, especially if you want to take advantage of SAWS WaterSaver Coupons come fall.

Here's what you can do now:

- **Add compost to turf and beds.** Organic matter from the compost increases soil's water-holding capacity and water infiltration.
- **Apply mulch to landscape beds.** Two inches of wood chips or pine bark mulch helps retain moisture for weeks at a time and reduces the required water for plants by half.

Tackle these simple tasks now and you'll be ready to put in new low water-use plants when the fall coupon season begins.



Learn to turn your organic kitchen waste into black gold during the **Home Composting Workshop** Saturday, Sept. 1, from 9 a.m. to noon at William R. Sinkin Eco Centro, 1802 N. Main Ave. Learn more at facebook.com/ecocentro1.

Event Calendar

San Antonio Film Festival

Aug. 1-5

Tobin Center for the Performing Arts
100 Auditorium Circle
safilm.com

Backyard Basics Expo

Aug. 3

San Antonio Garden Center
3310 N. New Braunfels Ave.
bexarmg.org/events

Explore the Canyon

Aug. 18

Government Canyon State
Natural Area
12861 Galm Road
bexarmg.org/events

Gardens and Yoga

Aug. 18

San Antonio Botanical Garden
555 Funston Place
sabot.org/events

Beginner Bird Walk

Aug. 25

Mitchell Lake Audubon Center
10750 Pleasanton Road
mitchelllake.audubon.org

Customer Service and 24-hour Emergency

210-704-SAWS (7297)
saws.org/waternews

Are You the Safest Driver in San Antonio?

So you think you're a safe driver? This is your chance to prove it — and win \$10,000 in the process.

Just enter San Antonio's Safest Driver Contest. Open to residents 18 years and older who drive in San Antonio from Bexar, Comal, Kendall and Guadalupe counties, the citywide competition runs through Sept. 3.

Here's how it works:

- **Download** the free San Antonio's Safest Driver app from your mobile device's app store. Just by downloading the app, you're entered into a random drawing for a \$150 prize every two weeks and a grand prize of \$2,000.



- **Drive** and follow the rules of the road. The app works in the background of your device as you drive on San Antonio streets and highways, scoring each trip by measuring speed, acceleration, braking, cornering and phone distraction.

- **Win** cash prizes based on your driving performance. The safer you are during your drive, the higher your score, and the better your chances of winning the cash prizes.

The app also provides feedback through driving tips and motivates drivers to drive safer through social leaderboards.

Visit sasafestdriver.com for more information including official rules and answers to frequently asked questions.

New Convenience Fees for Debit Card Payments

Beginning this month, KUBRA will become the new third-party processor for SAWS bill payments via debit/credit card and check.

Customers can still use Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover to make payments, but convenience fees for debit card transactions have changed.

When paying online or over the phone, the fee for residential customers will be \$2.25 for debit/credit card per \$500 payment. For commercial customers, the fee will be \$4.95 for debit/credit card up to a \$300 payment.

Customers can still pay their bill with no service fees by using a checking account — online, in person, by mail or by phone.

For more information, visit saws.org/pay.



It's a SAWS Summer!



Staycations can be just as fun as vacations, especially here in San Antonio. SAWS will be out and about this season to celebrate you, summer fun and some of the amazing things the Alamo City has to offer. SAWS partnered with several San Antonio City Council members to kick off #SAWSsummer with a swim goggle giveaway at several city pools. Follow @MySAWS on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to find out where we'll be next and how you can be a part of #SAWSsummer celebrations!