

Container Lease and Management Fee 5/4/2020

When was the last water bill increase? What is the automatic increase and how is that determined?

City of Houston Ordinance 2010-305 includes an automatic annual rate adjustment effective April 1st each year. The water and wastewater rate adjustment for 2020 is 3.5%. This rate adjustment is based on the 2019 Houston Regional Consumer Price Index of 2.2% plus the City of Houston population increase of 1.3% according to the United States Census Bureau.

This annual rate adjustment helps cover the cost increase to provide safe, clean drinking water and the collection and treatment of wastewater. New rate tables will be posted on April 1, 2020 to www.HoustonWater.org.

Can this fee be collected another way besides via the water bill?

The most appropriate way to handle the fee is via the utility customer billing system. All information pertaining to solid waste customer property locations is contained therein. Having a separate and unique system would be highly redundant and cumbersome.

Will there be any additional taxes assessed on the \$1.14 per month.

There are no taxes. This is a cost for service fee only. City fees are reviewed every 5 years based on the City of Houston Financial Policies.

What are our current recycling revenues? What is it costing the COH to recycle?

There are no revenues from curbside recycling. The city's cost pays about \$19.25 per ton for every recovered ton. Disposal of contamination products in the waste stream is at the city's standard landfill disposal rate of about \$26.00 per ton.

Will we have to pay the fee in perpetuity?

Yes. The fee is established to cover annual costs to manage the container inventory. This is an ongoing operation.

In 10 years the cost of the 2 can will be about \$137. Can a resident just pay the \$137 and not be billed monthly?

While a practical suggestion, the implementation would be disruptive to the utility billing system.

What happens if someone steals your containers? Who will be responsible for replacement costs? **Please see section 39-62 of the Houston Code of Ordinances.**

https://library.municode.com/tx/houston/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH39SOWALICO

Do seniors have to pay this container fee? Any exemptions available for seniors?

Yes. There are currently no planned exemptions to any accounts.

What if you don't want a green can? Do you have to have and pay for both containers?

Recycling is a basic service and is in place to ensure that valuable landfill airspace is available for future Houstonians. It is estimated that up to 75% of all material discarded in household trash is recyclable.

Is it possible to set the cost of the container fee for a certain number of years to prevent an increase every year? **The cost of the fee is set to deal with costs. As indicated above, costs for service are reviewed cyclically to ensure that there is not “fee creep”.**

How often has the cost of these containers risen in the last 10 years? Can we see that cost information? **The container cost has remained relatively stable over the past 10 years, however, the number of units in service as well as the cost to maintain them has risen. The lease will cover all costs associated with the program.**

Will these funds be in a dedicated fund? When the fee proves to be more than needed for containers will excess \$ go to the general fund? **The fees are to be dedicated to support the program. There is not an anticipation of “excess”. As stated above, fees for service can not be one penny more than required to provide the service.**

Is there currently an initial fee for service when someone moves to COH? Do we charge any solid waste fees to new neighborhoods? **No. There is no “connection” fee for service. The scenario portrayed with the question is generally handled in that manner in a solid waste utility.**

Can new neighborhoods creating MUD districts get private trash pick up instead of COH solid waste services? **MUDS outside the COH already provide these services.**

How much do we charge residents for replacement bins now? How is that money currently collected? **Charges for replacement bins and the reason are found here. https://library.municode.com/tx/houston/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=COOR_CH39SOWA_LICO**

How are funds collected for residents with 2 or more containers now? Is it on water bill? **Yes.**

Where are the funds for people with 2 or more bins found in the current budget? How is that collected? **It is in the solid waste budget for ECC revenue.**

How much will this fee generate a year? **The estimate is between \$4.5 and \$5 million per year.**

Where can we find the results from the solid waste task force? Is there a report of findings we can review? **Which solid waste task force is being referenced here. There have been several over the years and they have all come back with recommendations for properly sustained operations.**

What are the options for people who cannot pay the fee? **Individual customer cases will be worked on a case by case basis.**

How many COH employees drive city vehicles home beside police officers? **This question can be answered by the Fleet Management department. Take home privileges are authorized and reviewed by individual department directors.**