

New Customer Package Q&A

Welcome to Butler Area Sewer Authority

ATTACHMENTS:

(Available at www.basapa.org,
Info & Policies then New
Customer)

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The Butler Area Sewer Authority (Authority) wants to welcome you as a customer to our system. If you are an existing or returning customer you may be familiar with many of our policies and procedures. However, if you are a new customer we would like to provide you with answers to some of our most commonly asked questions as well as provide information on how to access some of our most utilized forms.

Please take a few minutes to scan the frequently asked questions and attachments as they provide important information. Additional information is available at the Authority's website, at www.basapa.org.

But first, a little background on the Authority. The Authority provides sanitary sewer collection and treatment for the City of Butler, Township of Butler, Center Township, areas in East Butler Borough, and limited areas of Summit, Oakland, and Connoquenessing Townships.

The Authority is organized under the Municipality Authorities Act of 1945, P.L. 382 (Act), as amended and supplemented, having been duly organized under the Act by joint action of the City of Butler and Township of Butler. Our Certificate of Incorporation was issued by the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on

November 13, 1962. On May 6, 1997 the articles of incorporation were amended to extend the existence of the Authority to February 6, 2046.

Again, welcome to the Authority. If we can be of additional service do not hesitate to contact us at **724-282-1978**.

In addition, the Authority operates a drive-thru teller service window and maintains walk-in office hours, excluding holidays as listed on page 2, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The office is located at, **100 Litman Road, Butler PA 16001**.

I am buying a new property, what do I need to do?

The seller, realtor, and/or settlement agent should have completed many of the required tasks in most cases. These tasks consist of obtaining a Document of Certification or valid Escrow Agreement for the *Realty Transfer Inflow/Infiltration Inspection*, as required by Ordinance, as well as a *No Lien Letter Request*. Once appropriate documentation is obtained the settlement agent should pro-rate the property's sewer bill on the settlement sheet for closing. During the closing process a *New Owner & Request for Change to Account Form* should be completed and submitted to the Authority. Once received, the Authority will update the account information and you will receive the next bill card at the address requested on the form. If the seller, realtor, or settlement agent has not completed any or all of these tasks it is your responsibility to do so as the new owner. (Reference Attachment Nos. 1, 2, and 3: *Application for Realty Transfer Inflow/Infiltration Inspection*, *No Lien Letter Request*, and *New Owner & Request for Change to Account Form*, respectively)

THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF THE FOLLOWING HOLIDAYS:

1. New Year's Day
2. Good Friday
3. Memorial Day
4. Independence Day
5. Labor Day
6. Thanksgiving Day
7. Day after Thanksgiving
8. Christmas Eve Day
9. Christmas Day

Holidays falling on Saturday or Sunday will be observed the Friday prior to or the Monday following, respectively.

How is sewer service billed?

For single family residential customers, sewer service is billed quarterly on a flat rate. Flat rate sewer service billing means that the Authority billing does not change based on your consumption of water during the period, therefore "flat rate" billing. The Authority's current [Fee Resolution](#), including sewer service charges, can be found at www.basapa.org under the Info & Policies tab then Service Charges and Fees menu.

Can I get the bill card mailed to someone else or a different address?

The bill card, and respective mailing address, must remain in the name of the owner(s) of record, otherwise stated, the deed holder. The owner of record may not assign the account to a third-party or alternate mailing address. This includes changes prior to the finalization of a foreclosure action, sale of a property, or to a tenant or property management agency. If you, as the owner, need to modify your mailing address submit a completed *New Owner & Request for Change to Account Form*. (Reference Attachment No. 3: *New Owner & Request for Change to Account Form*)

When can I expect to receive my bill and what does it look like?

Almost all of the Authority accounts are billed on a quarterly basis. These quarterly bills are issued at the beginning of January, April, July, and October each year. The bill reflects charges for services already provided by the Authority during the prior quarter. The bills are due, as specified on the bill card, at the beginning of the month following their issuance, so February, May, August, and November, respectively.

Authority bills are issued on two-part postcards, not in envelopes, so be careful to not dispose of them when they are delivered. The top of the bill card, which includes a scan line, should be returned with payment. You can maintain the bottom portion for your records. Please see *Understanding Your Bill Card* for additional information and a sample bill card. (Reference Attachment No. 4: *Understanding Your Bill Card*)

I want to pay my bill, what payment options are available?

The Authority offers a number of payment options for paying your bill as follows; **(1)** by mail (submit to 100 Litman Road, Butler, PA 16001), or **(2)** during regular office hours (M-F 8:00-4:00) at 100 Litman Road, Butler, PA by either paying in the office or at the drive-thru teller window, or **(3)** use the 24 hour payment drop box located at the office's drive-thru teller window, or **(4)** sign up for the *Direct Payment* program and the Authority will electronically draft the payment on the due date at no additional charge, or **(5)** credit/debit cards and e-checking/e-savings payments can be made through Value Payment Systems either by phone or on-line (fees applicable). (Reference Attachment Nos. 5 and 6: *Direct Payment Plan Disclosure Statement and Authorization Agreement* as well as the *Value Payment Systems - Pay your Butler Area Sewer Authority Bills Online*, respectively)

I paid my bill on-line through my bank or another vendor, why did I get a late fee?

Although you made an on-line payment, the payment process is manual through your bank or other on-line vendors. These banks and agencies accumulate your payment information into batches and then cut manual checks that are placed in the mail and sent to the Authority, often times after the bill due date. If you wish to use your bank or other on-line vendor please pay your bill early to allow time for the manual payment process to occur. Otherwise you may want to consider other payment options.

If you wish to make electronic payments, the Authority suggests using Value Payment Systems, fees apply, which is a third party contracted by the Authority. Payments made through Value Payment Systems are posted to your account as of the date they were paid by you. Another non-fee alternative is to sign up for the Authority's *Direct Payment* program. Instructions and additional information is provided in the attachments. (Reference Attachment Nos. 5 and 6: *Direct Payment Plan Disclosure Statement and Authorization Agreement* as well as the *Value Payment Systems - Pay your Butler Area Sewer Authority Bills Online*, respectively)



What happens if I miss paying my bill on time?

For quarterly accounts, the Authority bills after providing three months of sewer service and allows for in excess of one month for payment prior to the due date. Therefore, a penalty is applied and collection efforts are initiated.

If payment is not at the Authority office as of the due date, a penalty of 10% will be applied to the account immediately. If a balance remains unpaid, interest of 10% per year will be applied on a quarterly pro-rata basis prior to the issuance of the next bill. Past due bill cards stating that "Payment in Full Required Now" are mailed shortly after the due date each quarter. In addition, collection procedures that include water shut-offs for landlord/tenant and owner occupied properties also commence shortly after the due date of the quarterly billing cycle in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Shut-off notices are first sent through the mail, if no payment is made a secondary water shut-off notice will be posted at the property. Water shut-off will occur at or around the specified date for continued non-payment. Finally, the Authority does have the option to utilize additional collection methods that include, but are not limited to, placing a municipal lien against the property, magistrate claim against the owner, and/or sheriff sale of the property to remedy past due balances.

How can the Authority terminate my water service due to non-payment?

Termination of service is established by controlling the water that flows into the structure and ultimately into the sewer lateral and sewer system. As a result of non-payment of sewer services and at the request of the Authority, pursuant to the provisions of 53 P.S. § 2261-2265 inclusively, water service is terminated by Pennsylvania American Water Company through an inter-agency agreement. The charges assessed to the Authority for the disconnection and reconnection of the water service are passed through and charged to the respective utility billing account.

Can I terminate sewer service to my property and stop the billing?

In accordance with the Authority's Rules and Regulations billing is based on the physical connection to, or the requirement to, connect to the sanitary sewer system. Therefore billing continues regardless of a building's occupancy or the lack of water usage. Under certain circumstances billing may be discontinued if the sewer is eliminated, cut, capped, and inspected by the Authority. Such disconnections will be reported by the Authority to the respective municipality for review which could possibly subject the property to condemnation.

Butler Area Sewer Authority
100 Litman Road
Butler, PA 16001
Phone 724-282-1978
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We're on the Web!

www.basapa.org

What do I do for a sewage back-up, is it my responsibility?

Surprising to many homeowners, most sewage backups are caused as a result of issues in the property's own building sewers. In addition, state law provides many protections from what a customer may believe is the responsibility of the Authority. The Authority recommends that home owners review their insurance policies with their agent and consider purchasing additional riders that cover sewage back-ups. For more information on procedures to take prior to, during, or after a back-up occurs or for a sewage back-up claim form go to www.basapa.org or contact the Authority at 724-282-1978.

How do I request a final bill due to the sale of my property?

The Authority does not provide a final bill. The account continues to remain open and associated with the property even through a sale. The final billing process is completed by the settlement agent through a *No Lien Letter Request*. See below for "*What is a No Lien Letter?*"

I am selling my property what do I need to do and what is a Realty Transfer Inflow/Infiltration Inspection?

Contact the Authority as soon as possible to determine if a Realty Transfer Inflow/Infiltration Inspection (inspection) is required. This inspection is required by Ordinance, of each member Municipality within the Authority's service area, for property sales that generate a transfer tax. Once inspected and passed the property receives a Document of Certification that remains in effect for **5 years**. Any property that will generate a transfer tax and does not have a valid Document of Certification as of the date of settlement will require an inspection.

To schedule an inspection you must complete and submit the *Application for Realty Transfer Inflow/Infiltration Inspection* form and applicable non-refundable fee to the Authority. The inspection will then be scheduled, a field crew will complete an on-site inspection, and either a Document of Certification or Notice of Failure will be issued. If the property does not pass and a Notice of Failure is issued the owner must either make the corrections to the sewer or establish an approved escrow agreement and escrow fund before the sale takes place. (Reference Attachment No. 1: *Application for Realty Transfer Inflow/Infiltration Inspection*)

What is a No Lien Letter?

This is an inquiry made most often by a settlement agent to the Authority in regards to either a sale of a property or a refinancing of a property. It provides the settlement agent with any past due balances owing, obligations for services incurred but not yet billed, and if a lien has been placed on the property. Information contained in this letter is used to complete the settlement sheet during the closing process. (Reference Attachment No. 2: *No Lien Letter Request*)

Is the Authority regulated by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC)?

No, the Authority is established under the Municipal Authorities Act of 1945, P.L. 382 (Act), as amended and supplemented, having been duly organized under the Act by joint action of the City of Butler and Township of Butler. The Authority is governed by a five member Board, with three members appointed by the City of Butler and two members appointed by the Township of Butler. The Board holds monthly meetings that are open to the public.