



The Drinking Water Primacy Fee: What Does The Fee Do For You?

In 1992, the Missouri legislature enacted the public drinking water primacy fee to support the department's efforts to ensure Missourians have access to adequate water that is safe to drink. This user fee, paid by the customers of Missouri's public water supply systems, is set by state law and ranges from \$1.08 to \$3.24 per year for the average residential customer.

The primacy fee provides critical funding for laboratory services and activities the state must perform in order to maintain delegation of the federal drinking water program. This delegation is called "primacy." In states that have primacy (49 of the 50), public drinking water systems are regulated by a state agency instead of the federal government. Without the primacy fee, the Department of Natural Resources would lack the funding to implement critical regulations necessary for protecting public health and maintaining primacy, and regulation of Missouri's public water systems would revert to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The benefits of the primacy fee to public water systems:

- Laboratory testing services provided by the state.
- Reduced monitoring commensurate to contamination risk, based on vulnerability assessments provided by the Department of Natural Resources.
- Water system inspections and compliance oversight provided by the department to satisfy federal requirements.
- Technical assistance from the department to help maintain and achieve compliance and improved customer satisfaction.
- Access to low-interest loans for capital improvements from the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.
- Additional operator training opportunities funded by the state revolving fund.

Two percent of the primacy fee goes to the public water system to cover the costs of collecting the fee. The remainder is forwarded to the Missouri Department of Revenue for use by the Missouri Department of Natural Resources' Public Drinking Water Branch. The department uses the primacy fee to fund testing for drinking water contaminants, inspections, compliance activities, complaint investigations and technical assistance. In 2010, the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services began receiving an appropriation from the primacy fee for their bacteriological work, which was previously funded by general revenue - about \$455,000 annually. Approximately \$4.6 million per year is generated by the fee.

Historically, maintaining primacy has saved Missouri public water systems, and the customers of public water systems, about \$6.5 million per year. Over the next three years, Missouri water systems would have to pay more than \$15 million if they were to pay for their own testing. This is because public water systems would have to do more monitoring under the federal regulation than they do under state regulation. Vulnerability assessments performed by the Department of Natural Resources reduce the amount of monitoring by approximately 75 percent; EPA does not perform such assessments and would require the full scope of monitoring. Also, the state laboratory can perform tests for significantly less than a water system would have to pay on the open market. The costs of the increased monitoring would inevitably affect customer water bills.

In 2006 the Missouri Legislature increased the drinking water primacy fee and extended it through Sept. 1, 2012. The fee increase was necessary to help the department implement new federal rules that dramatically increased the state's monitoring costs. The public water system may collect the fee once a year or in monthly or quarterly installments.

Community public water supply systems collect the fee according to this rate table, based on the system's number of active service connections.

Missouri Drinking Water Primacy Fee Rate Structure Table		
Residential Customers - Number of Connections	Original Fee	Fee Effective Sept. 1, 2006
1 to 1,000 Connections	2.00	3.24
1,001 to 4,000 Connections	1.84	3.00
4,001 to 7,000 Connections	1.67	2.76
7,001 to 10,000 Connections	1.50	2.40
10,001 to 20,000 Connections	1.34	2.16
20,001 to 35,000 Connections	1.17	1.92
35,001 to 50,000 Connections	1.00	1.56
50,001 to 100,000 Connections	.84	1.32
More than 100,000 Connections	.66	1.08
Meters greater than 1" but less than or equal to 2"	5.00	7.44
Meters greater than 2" but less than or equal to 4"	25.00	41.16
Meters greater than 4"	50.00	82.44

For more information

Missouri Department of Natural Resources
 Water Protection Program - Public Drinking Water Branch
 P.O. Box 176
 Jefferson City, MO 65102-0176
 800-361-4827 or 573-751-5331 office
 573-526-1146 fax
www.dnr.mo.gov/env/wpp