



Customer Guide



***Essential Information About
Your Water Utility***



Welcome

Thank you for being our customer. ONWASA's mission is to protect our community's health and the environment by providing high-quality water utility services through excellent customer experiences.

Our Customer Service Team created this guide to provide you with answers to questions our customers frequently ask. If you have questions not addressed in this guide, please do not hesitate to contact Customer Service at (910) 455-0722 or online through the Customer Portal at ONWASA.com.

Who We Are

ONWASA is one of the largest water providers in North Carolina. We are a special government authority that provides water and wastewater services to areas of Onslow County outside the City of Jacksonville, as well as the towns of Holly Ridge, Swansboro, Richlands, North Topsail Beach, and portions of Surf City. ONWASA also provides bulk water services to Pender County and local military bases.

We are continuing to grow and expand as families discover how great it is to live in eastern North Carolina. ONWASA does not receive tax dollars and must generate all of our revenue from services provided to the customer. For that reason, we are commonly referred to as a water utility. We are managed by a Chief Executive Officer, with an eight-member Board of Directors making all policy decisions and setting the overall direction of the water utility.



Establishing Service

An application and payment of a connection fee is required to establish service. You can do it one of several ways: online, by mail, or in our main or satellite offices in the town halls of Richlands, Swansboro, and Holly Ridge.

New customers can fill out an online Application for Water Service form. Once your online form is submitted, an ONWASA representative will contact you within two business days. We are happy to provide same-day service for all requests received before 4 p.m ET. After 4 p.m., after-hours fees apply.

A deposit is normally required. In certain situations, such as having a good payment history with ONWASA or another utility, ONWASA offers options to allow waiver of this requirement. Contact Customer Service for waiver qualifications.



Payments & Billing

ONWASA offers a variety of ways to pay your bill that fit your lifestyle and the demands on your time.

We offer online bill payment; Automated telephone payment (IVR) using your credit or debit card by calling 1-877-302-2787; and in-person at our main office or one of our satellite office locations.

Drop boxes are available for check and money order payments only at our main and satellite offices. Please do not leave cash in any of the drop boxes.



E-Billing

Many ONWASA customers find our E-Billing system to be a very convenient way to manage their accounts. Our Customer Portal enables you to access your account to electronically view your usage and pay your bills.

By registering your account at [ONWASA.com](https://www.onwasa.com), you can gain important information about your bill any time, day or night. You can see your usage, account history, payment history, set up credit card or bank drafting, update contact information, and pay your bill online.

To register for paperless billing today, visit our Customer Portal and [click the 'Register' link](#).



Rates & Fees

Providing clean water to our local communities is no small task. We must strike a balance every year between properly maintaining our systems for current and future generations and setting our rates and fees so they are affordable for all.

To fund necessary infrastructure projects, water and sewer rates may need to rise. You can find our Rate & Fee Schedule on our website, [ONWASA.com](https://www.onwasa.com).

As always, if you would like to speak to us about your rates and fees, we invite you to call us at (910) 455-0722 or contact us by using the [Contact Us link](#) on our website.



Excellent Water Quality

ONWASA is completely committed to providing you with a safe and dependable supply of drinking water. We want you to know how we continually improve the water treatment process and protect our water resources.

Our efforts begin with selecting the best possible source of "raw" or untreated water available to us; we exclusively use ancient underground aquifers buried deep below the earth. Some of our wells are more than 600 feet deep! The aquifers are very hard to contaminate, making them excellent sources for water. ONWASA does NOT use surface water, rainwater, or sea water as drinking water sources. Once the raw water is obtained, we treat it using advanced treatment methods, including reverse osmosis. All of our water system operators are state-certified and highly trained.

We conduct thousands of lab tests both at our water treatment plants and at our own laboratory. Our federally-mandated water quality report can be found online at [ONWASA.com](https://www.onwasa.com). It details how ONWASA works to meet or exceed all state and federal drinking water standards.



Leak Prevention & Detection

The best way to avoid higher bills caused by water leaks is to prevent them from happening in the first place. Here are some steps you can take:

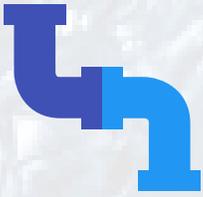
- Know where your home's water shutoff is in case of emergency. Read our "Meters" section to find your shutoff valve.
- Listen for running water in your bathrooms.
- Inspect under your sinks, dishwashers, and refrigerators.
- Check washing machine hoses and connections.
- Check for pipe condensation and corrosion.
- Check your water heater for bulges and corrosion.
- Disconnect outside hoses when they are not in use to make sure the water is off.



A dripping faucet or constantly running toilet is fairly obvious, but hidden leaks - such as those in an irrigation system - could waste hundreds of gallons per day. There are several ways to find a leak. To start, look at your water meter when all of your water is off. If the meter is still moving, you may have a leak.



Check your toilets, making sure the flappers are working well by using food coloring in your tank. Irrigation systems and outside faucets are also main culprits, especially after the winter months. Look for wet areas on your lawn. Check your washing and dishwashing machines as well.



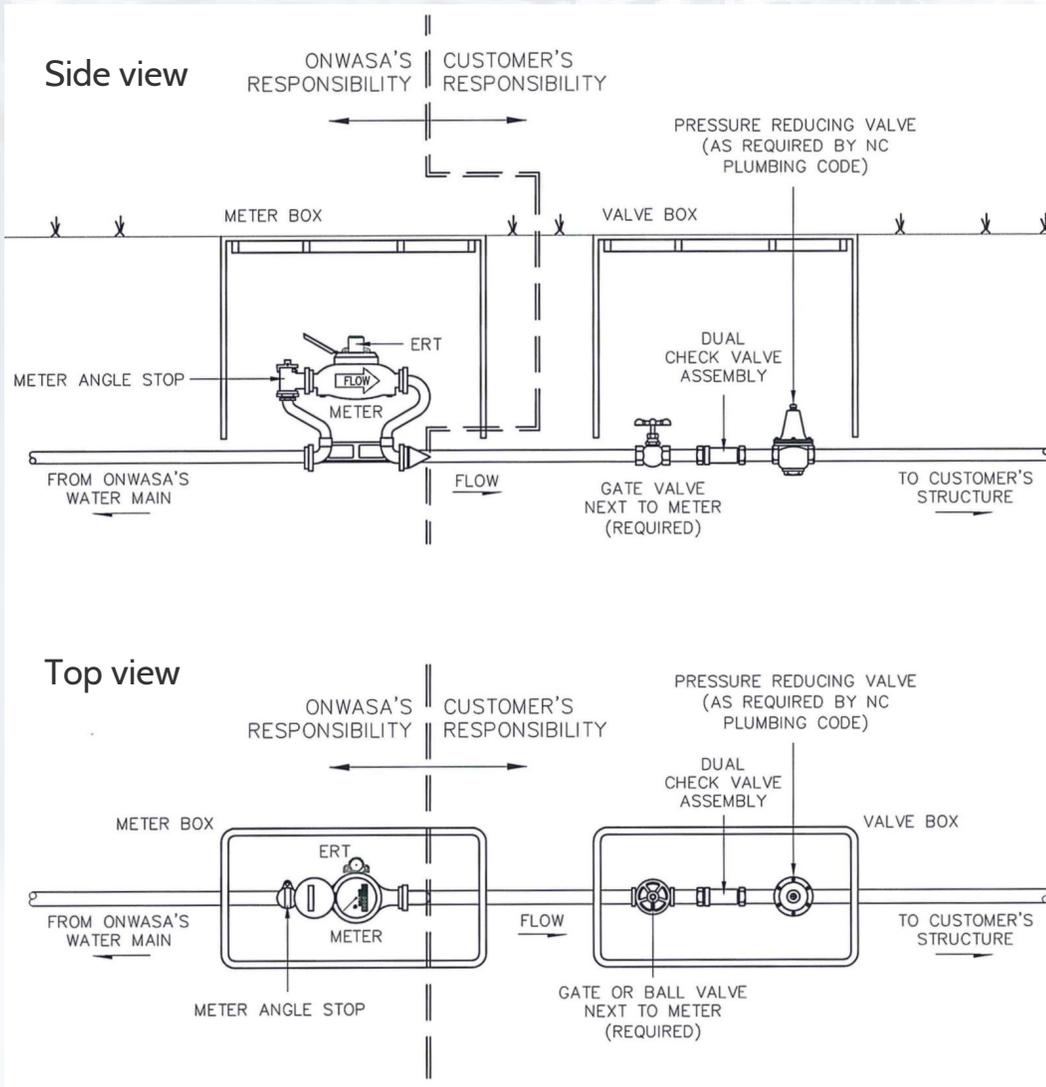
What's in My Yard?

The devices that provide you with your water are mostly underground, making them a mystery to many property owners. Some of the equipment is owned by ONWASA and should not be disturbed for your safety. Other devices belong to property owners and are their responsibilities.

Below are diagrams of typical ONWASA water devices that should not be disturbed, including your water meter. Your meter may use a radio transmitter for more efficient reading by our staff.

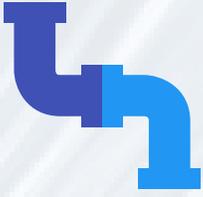
Your Shutoff Valve

Your gate or ball valve (shown below) on the home/business side of your water meter allows you to easily shut off your water in case of any emergency.



Meter & Valve Boxes Similar to Diagrams





What's in My Yard? (continued)

Meters

Water meters may be manufactured by different companies but all achieve three basic functions. First, they measure the amount of water you use to determine your bill.

Second, your meter has a leak indicator. A small triangle or gear-shaped object spins when water is flowing to your home. If ALL of your water is turned off and this indicator is still moving, you likely have a leak.



Third, your meter gives you the ability to determine your current usage. You can read your meter and get the current number of gallons then subtract it from your last reading, which you can find on your last bill or by calling Customer Service.

Backflow Prevention Devices

Some properties are connected to backflow prevention devices that protect ONWASA's water system from possible contaminants "flowing back" into our water. All properties with swimming pools or irrigation systems tied into ONWASA's water supply must have a backflow preventer. The device is the responsibility of the property owner.

Properties with an outdoor fixture within fifty (50) feet of a permanent, non-potable body of water (ocean, sound, lake, river, etc.) must also have backflow prevention devices.

Typical Backflow Prevention Device

Covered



Uncovered





Call 811 Before You Dig

There are millions of miles of buried utilities under ground that are vital to everyday life like water, electricity, and natural gas. Because of all of the devices in your yard, you must call 811 before digging around your home to protect yourself and others from unintentionally hitting utility lines.

When you call 811 a few days before you dig, your underground utility lines will be marked FOR FREE. This will prevent injury to you or your family, damage to your property, utility service outages to the entire neighborhood, and potential fines and repair costs.



Service Disconnection

ONWASA offers an easy-to-use, [online form](#) for you to use to disconnect your service. Please complete the required information in its entirety to have your services disconnected. Upon receipt of your request, ONWASA will complete the disconnection within five (5) business days from the date confirmed. (Completed Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

Upon completion of the disconnection, ONWASA will generate a final statement which will show any balance owed or credit balance to be refunded. This statement, and any further correspondence, will be sent to the forwarding address supplied.



Hurricane Preparations

- Store at least one gallon of water per day for each person and each pet. You should consider storing more water than this for hot climates, for pregnant women, and for persons who are sick. (Try to store a 2-week supply if possible).
- Use of food-grade water storage containers, like those found at surplus or camping supply stores, is recommended if you prepare stored water yourself.
- For more preparation steps, [visit www.ready.gov/hurricanes](http://www.ready.gov/hurricanes).



ONWASA's Customer Alert System

ONWASA's Notify Me Customer Alert System provides our customers with email, text, and phone messages about service outages, boil water advisories, and other incidents. Additionally, the self-service tool in the Alerts & Advisories section of the website offers outage lookup by address. [Alerts and Advisories](#).

If you miss a Notify Me call, dial 1-855-4-REPLAY (473-7529) to hear the last call made to your phone number.



Change of Address

ONWASA offers an easy-to-use, [online form](#) for you to use to change the mailing address for billing statements. The form is not to be used when moving water and/or wastewater services to a different address. If you need further help, please call (910) 455-0722 to speak with a customer service representative.



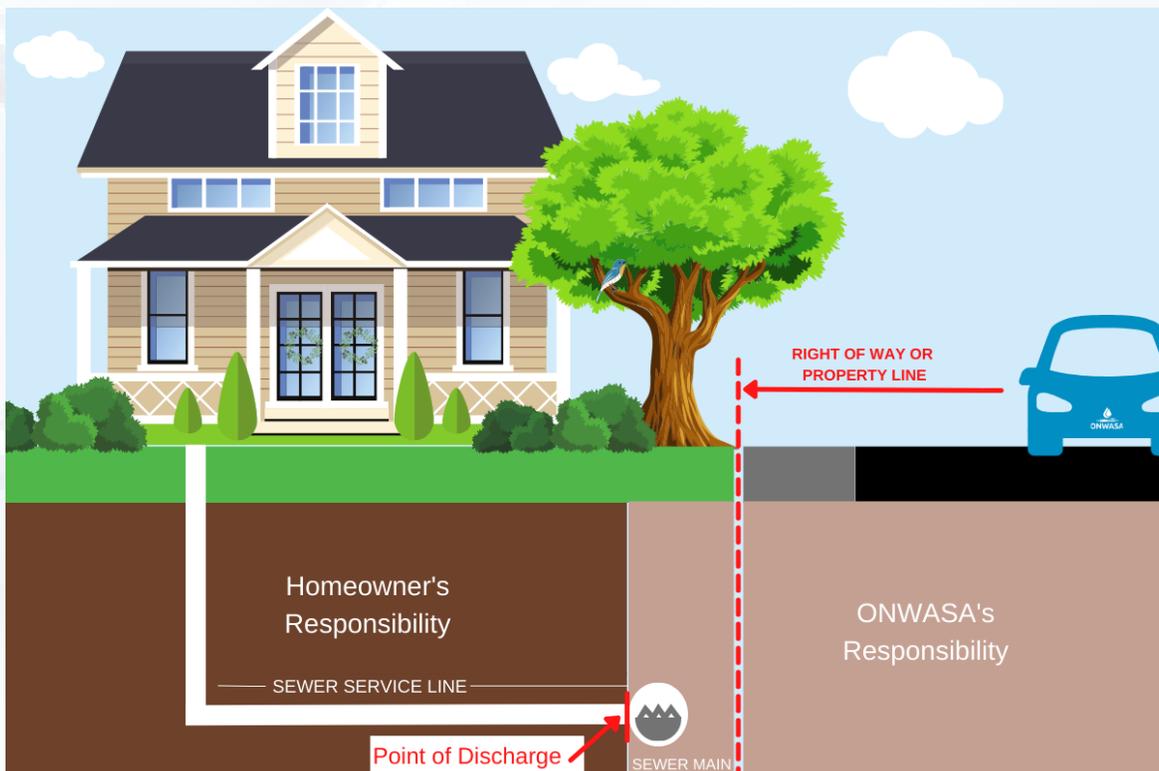
Customer Assistance

As a responsible water utility that provides important services to you and your family, ONWASA believes you have the right to ask us about issues of concern, especially about your bill. We also want to make sure you are proactively informed about our work and how it may impact your account. For Financial Assistance information, please visit our website.



Defining Water/Sewer Line Responsibility

When a water or sewer problem occurs outside of your home, it can be confusing where your responsibility ends and ONWASA's responsibility begins. Here's a graphic to show you where the dividing line is:





Frequently Asked Questions

How often will I be billed?

ONWASA customers are billed monthly. You will receive your first account statement for 30-45 days after becoming an ONWASA customer. ONWASA customers only pay for services they have used since their last meter reading.

Can I receive an extension to pay my bill?

Yes, ONWASA offers payment arrangement options to assist customers. Please contact Customer Service at (910) 455-0722 for assistance.

How can I pay my bill?

- By phone at 1-877-302-2787
- [Online at ONWASA.com](https://www.onwasa.com)
- In person at four locations in Jacksonville, Holly Ridge, Richlands, and Swansboro.

How do I know if I have a leak?

Many water leaks are visible on the property or within the home, but some are less visible and may be noticed when higher usage shows on a water account statement.

Water meters have a leak indicator near the dials, in the shape of a gear or triangle, to assist in leak identification. By turning off any fixtures that use water, you will be able to check for a leak using the leak indicator. If the leak indicator is turning with all fixtures are in the off position, a leak may be present.

What should I do if I experience discoloration in my water?

Naturally occurring minerals in your water, such as iron, manganese, calcium, chloride and other dissolved minerals sometimes come out of the dissolved state in a reaction to the chlorine used to treat your water.

Iron specifically will settle at the bottom of your pipes until high flow rates disturb the particles allowing it to mix back in with your water. This causes a brown or yellow tinge in your water. It is not a health threat and will often clear within 10-15 minutes. You may choose to expedite the process of flushing your lines by running cold water in the tub or shower.

Should the problem persist, please contact our water quality team for assistance at (910) 937-7524.



Frequently Asked Questions

Why am I experiencing low water pressure?

You may be experiencing a service issue in your neighborhood. Please contact ONWASA at (910) 455-0722, option 3 to report the situation and receive additional information.

What should I do if there is a water main break in my area?

ONWASA personnel will notify affected customers with an automated call, text, or e-mail when an outage is identified and again when water is restored. Customers can assist in this process by ensuring their contact information is accurate on their ONWASA account. Once the repair is completed, a precautionary boil water advisory will be issued until water quality results confirm it can be lifted. The water is completely safe to use for showering, laundry, or other household tasks. However, as a precaution, customers should boil any water used for consumption for three minutes, and let it cool, prior to consumption. If you experience discolored water, review our FAQ on page 10.

Why am I charged a base charge and usage?

The base charge covers the fixed costs associated with providing system facility capacity and the repayment of annual debt service. The usage, volumetric or fixed, charge covers direct and indirect costs associated with supply, treatment, distribution, collection and administration.

Can I opt-out of paper account statements?

Yes, you may choose e-statements by logging in to the Customer Portal at ONWASA.com. Then choose Account Overview. Under Quick Links, click on paperless billing. Then select Paperless Bill.

How does ONWASA prepare for inclement weather?

ONWASA regularly conducts emergency response exercises for inclement weather. Preparations are made to respond quickly and efficiently should an outage occur due to inclement weather.

ONWASA uses a telephone, e-mail, and text notification system to ensure communication with our customers during inclement weather. In order to receive urgent notifications from ONWASA is to ensure your contact information is updated regularly.

How do I update my contact information?

You may update your contact information by e-mailing the changes to updateinfo@onwasa.com or by contacting Customer Service at (910) 455-0722.

ONWASA Contact Information

228 Georgetown Rd.
Jacksonville, NC 28540
Main Line: (910) 455-0722
Fax: (910) 455-2583

Customer Service:
(910) 455-0722

Office Hours:
Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 5:00 pm

**For Emergencies &
Water Main Leaks/Breaks:
(910)455-0722, Option 3**

ONWASA Satellite Office Locations

Holly Ridge Town Hall
212 Dyson Street
Holly Ridge, NC 28445
Phone: (910) 329-7081
Monday-Friday
8am to 4pm

Richlands Town Hall
302 S Wilmington St.
Richlands, NC 28574
Phone: (910) 324-3301
Monday-Thursday
8am to 5pm
Friday 8am to 12 pm

Swansboro Town Hall
601 W. Corbett Ave.
Swansboro, NC 28584
Phone: (910) 326-4428
Monday-Thursday
8am to 5pm
Friday 8am to 1pm

Stay Connected!

You can update your contact information quickly and easily
by e-mailing changes to updateinfo@onwasa.com.