

ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

Acronyms

AWWA - American Water Works Association
BAT - Best available technology
BMP - Best management practice
BuRec - United States Bureau of Reclamation
DOI - United States Department of the Interior
DSM - Demand-side management
EPA - United States Environmental Protection Agency
gpcd - Gallons per capita per day
gpf - Gallons per flush
gpm - Gallons per minute
IRP - Integrated resource plan (or planning)
mgd - Million gallons per day
MOU - Memorandum of understanding
NAWC - National Association of Water Companies
NIOSH - National Institute For Occupational Safety & Health
NCTCOG - North Central Texas Council Of Government
NFPA - National Fire Protection Association
NTMWD - North Texas Municipal Water District
OSHA - Occupational Safety & Health Association
SRF - State Revolving Fund
SDWA - Safe Drinking Water Act
TCEQ - Texas Commission On Environmental Quality
TEEX - Texas Engineering Extension Service
TRWA - Texas Rural Water Association
TWDB - Texas Water Development Board
TWUA - Texas Water Utilities Association
ULFT - Ultra-low-flush toilet
WEF - Water Environmental Federation
WEAT - Water Environmental Association Of Texas

Glossary

Appropriation. The right to withdraw water from its source.

Audit (end-use). A systematic accounting of water uses by end users (residential, commercial, or industrial), often used to identify potential areas for water reduction, conservation, or efficiency improvement.

Audit (system). A systematic accounting of water throughout the production, transmission, and distribution facilities of the system.

Available supply. The maximum amount of reliable water supply, including surface water, groundwater, and purchases under secure contracts.

Average-day demand. A water systems average daily use based on total annual water production (total annual gallons or cubic feet divided by 365); multiple years can be used to account for yearly variations.

Avoided cost. The savings associated with undertaking a given activity (such as demand management) instead of an alternative means of achieving the same results (such as adding supply); can be used to establish the least-cost means of achieving a specified goal. Can be measured in terms of incremental cost.

Baseline. An established value or trend used for comparison when conditions are altered, as in the introduction of water conservation measures.

Beneficial use. A use of water resources that benefits people or nature. State law may define beneficial use.

Benefit-cost analysis. A comparison of total benefits to total costs, usually expressed in monetary terms, used to measure efficiency and evaluate alternatives. See also cost-effectiveness and avoided-cost.

Best management practice. A measure or activity that is beneficial, empirically proven, cost-effective, and widely accepted in the professional community.

Block. A quantity of water for which a price per unit of water (or billing rate) is established.

Budget (water-use). An accounting of total water use or projected water use for a given location or activity.

Capital facilities. Physical facilities used in the production, transmission, and distribution of water.

Commodity charge. See variable charge.

Community water system. According to the SDWA, a drinking water conveyance system serving at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents of the area served by the system or regularly serving at least 25 year-round residents.

Conservation (water). Any beneficial reduction in water losses, waste, or use.

Conservation pricing. Water rate structures that help achieve beneficial reductions in water usage. See non-promotional rates.

Consumptive use. Use that permanently withdraws water from its source.

Cost-effectiveness. A comparison of costs required for achieving the same benefit by different means. Costs are usually expressed in dollars, but benefits can be expressed in another unit (such as a quantity of water). See net benefits.

Customer class. A group of customers (residential, commercial, industrial, wholesale, and so on) defined by similar costs of service or patterns of water usage.

Decreasing-block (or declining-block) rate. A pricing structure for which the dollar amount charged per unit of water (such as dollars per gallon) decreases with the amount water usage.

Demand forecast. A projection of future demand that can be made on a system-wide or customer-class basis.

Demand management. Measures, practices, or incentives deployed by water utilities to permanently reduce the level or change the pattern of demand for a utility service.

Demographic. Having to do with population or socioeconomic conditions.

Discount rate. A percentage that is used to adjust a forecast of expenditures to account for the time value of money or opportunity costs; it can be based on the utility's cost of capital.

Distribution facilities. Pipes, treatment, storage and other facilities used to distribute drinking water to end users.

Drought. A sustained period of inadequate or subnormal precipitation that can lead to water supply shortages, as well as increased water usage.

End use. Fixtures, appliances, and activities that use water.

End user. Residential, commercial, industrial, governmental, or institutional water consumer.

Escalation rate. A percentage that is used to adjust a forecast of expenditures to account for the increasing value of a good or service over time (apart from the discount rate and inflationary effects).

Evapotranspiration. Water losses from the surface of soils and plants.

Fixed charge. The portion of a water bill that does not vary with water usage.

Fixed costs. Costs associated with water service that do not vary with the amount of water produced or sold.

Gray-water. Treated wastewater used for non-potable purposes, such as irrigation.

Increasing-block (or inclining-block) rate. A pricing structure for which the dollar amount charged per unit of water (such as dollars per gallon) increases with the amount water usage.

Incremental cost. The additional cost associated with adding an increment of capacity.

Instream flow. River and stream waters that maintain stream quality, aquatic life, and recreational opportunities.

Integrated resource planning. An open and participatory planning process emphasizing least-cost principles and a balanced consideration of supply and demand management options for meeting water needs.

Investor-owned utility. A private utility owned by investors and typically regulated by a state public utility commission.

Irrigation scheduling. An automated method for optimizing outdoor water use by matching the watering schedule to plant needs.

Large-volume user. A water customer, usually industrial or wholesale, whose usage is substantial relative to other users; large-volume users may present unique peaking or other demand characteristics.

Peak detection. Methods for identifying water leakage in pipes and fittings.

Life span. The expected useful life of a supply-side or demand-side project, measure, or practice. (The life span may not be identical to useful life for tax purposes.)

Load management. Methods for managing levels and patterns of usage in order to optimize system resources and facilities.

Losses (water). Metered source water less revenue-producing water and authorized un-metered water uses.

Low water-use landscaping. Use of plant materials that are appropriate to an area's climate and growing conditions (usually native and adaptive plants). See Xeriscape.™, market penetration. The extent to which an activity or measure is actually implemented compared to all potential uses or markets.

Marginal-cost pricing. A method of rate design where prices reflect the costs associated with producing the next increment of supply.

Master metering. A large meter at a point of distribution to multiple uses or users that could be further sub metered. Includes metered wholesale sales.

Maximum-day demand. Total production for the water system on its highest day of production during a year.

Meter. An instrument for measuring and recording water volume.

Mixed-use meter. A meter measuring water use for more than one type of end use (such as indoor and outdoor use).

Needle peaks. Persistent levels of peak demand that drive the capacity needs of a water system despite reductions in average demand.

Net benefits. The numerical difference between total benefits and total costs, both of which must be expressed in the same unit (usually dollars). See cost-effectiveness.

Net present value. The present value of benefits less the present value of costs.

Nominal dollars. Forecast dollars that are not adjusted for inflation.

Non-account water. Metered source water less metered water sales.

Non-consumptive use. Water withdrawn and returned to the source.

Non-promotional rates. Rates that do not encourage additional consumption by water users.

Non-residential customer. A commercial or industrial utility customer.

Normalization. Adjustment of a variable to a normal level based on averaging over an accepted period of time; used in forecasting.

Opportunity cost. The value of a foregone opportunity that cannot be pursued because resources are taken up by a chosen activity.

Peak demand. The highest point of total water usage experienced by a system, measured on an hourly and on a daily basis.

Per-capita use. Total use divided by the total population served.

Per-capita residential use. Residential use divided by the total population served.

Precipitation rate (sprinkling). The surface application rate for landscape watering, usually expressed in inches per hour.

Present value. Future expenditures expressed in current dollars by adjusting for a discount rate that accounts for financing costs.

Pressure regulator. A post-meter device used to limit water pressure.

Price elasticity of demand. A measure of the responsiveness of water usage to changes in price; measured by the percentage change in usage divided by the percentage change in price.

Rationing. Mandatory water-use restrictions sometimes used under drought or other emergency conditions.

Raw water. Untreated water.

Real dollars. Forecast dollars that are adjusted for inflation.

Retrofit. Replacement of parts in an existing plumbing fixture or water-using appliance in order to improve its operational efficiency.

Revenue-producing water. Water metered and sold.

Reuse (water). Beneficial use of treated wastewater.

Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). Federal drinking water quality legislation administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through state primacy agencies; amended in 1996.

Safe yield. The maximum reliable amount that can be withdrawn from a source without compromising quality or quantity, as defined by hydrological studies; can be based on acceptable withdrawals during a critical supply period or drought with a specific probability of occurrence.

Seasonal rate. A pricing structure for which the dollar amount charged per unit of water (such as dollars per gallon) varies by season of use; higher rates usually are charged in the season of peak demand.

Sensitivity analysis. An analysis of alternative results based on variations in assumptions; a what if analysis.

Service territory. The geographic area served by a water utility.

Source-of-supply. Facilities used to extract and/or store raw water prior to transmission and distribution.

Source meter. A meter used to record water withdrawn from a surface water or groundwater source, or purchased from a wholesale supplier.

State Revolving Fund (SRF). State loan funds for water utilities established under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Supply management. Measures deployed by the utility that improve the efficiency of production, transmission, and distribution facilities.

Sub-metering. Metering for units comprising a larger service connection, such as apartments in a multifamily building.

Surcharge. A special charge on a water bill used to send customers a specific pricing signal and recover costs associated with a particular activity.

System (water). A series of interconnected conveyance facilities owned and operated by a drinking water supplier; some utilities operate multiple water systems.

Take-or-pay. A contract provision obligating a purchaser to pay for a commodity whether or not delivery is taken.

Tariff. The schedule of a utility's rates and charges.

Toilet tank displacement device. A plastic bag or dam installed in a toilet tank to reduce flush volume. Considered effective only for fixtures using more than 3.5 gallons per flush.

Toilet flapper. Valve in the toilet tank that controls flushing.

Transfers (water). Exchange of water among willing buyers and sellers.

Transmission facilities. Pipes used to transport raw or treated water to distribution facilities.

Treated water. Water treated to meet drinking water standards.

Ultra-low-flush toilet. A toilet that uses not more than 1.6 gallons per flush.

Unaccounted-for water. The amount of non-account water less known or estimated losses and leaks.

Uniform rate. A pricing structure for which the dollar amount charged per unit of water (such as dollars per gallon) does not vary with the amount of water usage.

Universal metering. Metering of all water-service connections.

Un-metered water. Water delivered but not measured for accounting and billing purposes.

User class. See customer class.

Variable charge. The portion of a water bill that varies with water usage; also known as a commodity charge.

Variable cost. Costs associated with water service that vary with the amount of water produced or sold.

Water right. A property right or legal claim to withdraw a specified amount of water in a specified time frame for a beneficial use.

Watershed. A regional land area, defined by topography, soil, and drainage characteristics, within which raw waters collect and replenish supplies.

Weather-adjusted. Water demand, revenues, or other variables adjusted to a normal weather year; also known as weather normalization.

Wholesale water. Water purchased or sold for resale purposes.

Xeriscape. TM Landscaping that involves seven principles: proper planning and design; soil analysis and improvement; practical turf areas; appropriate plant selection; efficient irrigation; mulching; and appropriate maintenance.