

## City Offers Residents Option to ‘Balance’ Their Utility Bills

Frustrated by water bills that seem to range from very high to very low and back to high again?

The City of Brentwood’s Finance Department has an answer for that — Balanced Billing, for those who want it.

Available to all Brentwood residents who request it, the Balanced Billing Plan calculates each water bill by adding the resident’s current actual bill to the last 11 actual monthly bills and dividing by 12, producing a balanced bill.

The eligibility criteria are at least 12 months of billing history with the City and no more than two late payments, no payment arrangements and no disconnects for non-payment in the previous 12 months.

Unlike some plans where a balloon payment is due at the end of the year if the actual amount exceeds the billed amount, Brentwood’s makes no such adjustments until the resident leaves the program.

“To protect a resident from having too large of an unbilled balance at any point in time, we do add back on

a small percentage of under-billings to the balanced bill,” says Kerry Breen of the City Finance Department.

For example, a resident who just signed up for the plan has an average monthly bill of \$100.

The first month, the resident actually uses \$120 worth of services. The bill would be the \$100 plus about \$1.20 to avoid creating too large a balance. This would mean the resident would be billed \$101.20, and the system would know that the resident still owes the City \$18.80, Breen says.

Applications can be requested by phone at (925) 516-5415 or can be picked up at City Hall, 708 Third St. or are available online at <http://www.ci.brentwood.ca.us>.

To obtain the form online, click on [Utility Billing](#) in the City Departments section of the City’s home page. On the next page, just click on the “You Are Invited to Participate in the Utility Balanced Billing Plan” icon to download the form and information for the program.

## Compost Classes Still Available for Signups

Residents may still sign up for composting workshops that are being held through Nov. 5 at a variety of locations in East and Central Contra Costa.

All workshops on the natural recycling technique are free. The address for each site within the sponsoring community will be determined by the size of each session’s enrollment.

For Brentwood workshops, call (925) 516-6090.

For classes in Antioch, call (925) 779-7097; Pittsburg, (925) 252-4114; Pleasant Hill (925) 671-5265; county-sponsored sites, (925) 335-1224.

- Brentwood has one remaining

workshop from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Oct. 1.

- Oakley hosts a county-sponsored class from 7 to 9 p.m. Oct. 12.
- Antioch is hosting one more class from 9 to 11 a.m. Oct. 8.
- Pittsburg is hosting two more classes from 9 to 11 a.m. Sep. 24 and Oct. 22.
- Pleasant Hill sessions are 7 to 9 p.m. Oct. 19 and Nov. 2.

• Other county-sponsored workshops are at Bay Point from 1 to 3 p.m. Oct. 1, and Crockett, 9 to 11 a.m. Nov. 5.

All class participants will be eligible to purchase a compost bin for \$45 or about half the retail price.

## Plans to Improve Solid Waste Transfer Station

The City is working on plans to expand the capacity and efficiency of its Solid Waste Transfer Station in anticipation of future population growth in Brentwood.

The plans call for the open-air transfer station at 2300 Elkins Way to be placed under a roof. The dumping area would be expanded and a loading dock built and raised to make it easier for trucks to haul away garbage and recyclables.

“If all goes well, we could be operational in 10 or 12 months from the start of construction,” says Jon Carlson, the City’s Solid Waste Manager. “Construction is expected to start next spring.”

The cost of the improvements are being studied, he adds.

Currently City waste collection trucks dump their loads onto an asphalt pad. Material is scooped and lifted up into larger trucks and hauled to various facilities.

With the raised dock, the material will be unloaded inside a building and pushed over the edge of the dock into waiting trucks. This process will take five minutes as opposed to the current 30 minutes, Carlson says.

A roofed transfer station will also keep the wind from scattering debris.

Mixed recyclables are taken to Milpitas where they are separated and processed.

Garbage and green waste are taken to Keller Canyon where green waste is used to cover the garbage every day. At the end of each day, freshly dumped garbage must be covered with six inches of dirt or green waste, according to Carlson.

The improvements to the transfer station will allow the City to handle the larger volumes that are expected in the next 20 years, he adds.