



Understanding Your City Of Johannesburg Invoice

Written by **Duncan Seoloana**

What is the COJ Invoice?

The City of Johannesburg (COJ) invoice is your monthly municipal account statement. It shows the charges for services provided to your property by the City. It is both a bill and a statement of account, keeping you informed about what you owe, what you have paid, and the services provided. See below services for the two distinct property types within COJ:

1. Sectional Title Scheme: A sectional title property means you own a unit inside a shared complex or building, plus a share the common property.

- **What you own:** The inside of your flat, townhouse, or unit (your "section")
- **Who manages it:** A Body Corporate (made up of all owners in the complex) manages and maintains accounts of the shared services.
- **Who pays:** Owners within the scheme are responsible for individual payments of their own accounts for Only Property rates and Refuse issued to them by the City.
- Owners within the scheme are also responsible for jointly paying the shared services account for water, sewer and electricity issued to the Body Corporate by the City.

2. Freehold (Full Title) Stand: A freehold stand (sometimes called "full title") means you own the entire property outright — both the land and the building(s) on it.

- **What you own:** The house itself and the land it stands on.
- **Who manages it & Pays:** You, as the property owner, handle the services account through maintenance and payment of all Municipal charges (property rates, water, electricity, refuse, sewer) directly linked to your property.

The Two Pages of Your COJ Invoice

Your City of Johannesburg Municipal invoice is made up of two important pages, each serving a different purpose in helping you understand your account. Together, they make sure you not only know how much to pay, but also why you are paying it.

Front page: The front page of the invoice is the summary page. It gives you the big picture of your account at a glance. Here you will find:

- Your property details, account number, the total amount you owe, and the due date for payment.
- This page is also where you will see important notices from the City, such as tariff updates, payment reminders, or new customer programmes.

Its main purpose is to show you, quickly and clearly, what needs to be paid and by when, so you can plan and avoid penalties.

- Has Residential/Business customer information (e.g. Account no, classification, address, township, stand size, value etc)
- Bill information (e.g., payments, bill date, due date, adjustments, ageing analysis, payment details etc)
- VAT

The back page: Provides the details behind the summary. It explains exact calculations of the main services you are being billed for, such as electricity, water, sewer, refuse removal, and property rates, in a simple table format. Here you will see:

- Your meter readings for electricity and water, the tariffs that have been applied, and the difference between fixed charges (a basic fee for access to services) and consumption charges (what you used).
- The back page also includes details about your property rates, sewer, and refuse charges, as well as any adjustments, penalties, or credits.

This page is important because it gives you transparency — it allows you to check if the readings are accurate, monitor your usage, and understand how each charge adds up to the total shown on the front.

Has account specific information such as 5 services: fixed (rates, refuse, sewer), and variable (water and electricity).

- Sewer calculations
- Reading periods, meter no, consumption calculations
- Property value and rates calculations
- Refuse calculations
- Other charges
- VAT

Understanding Your City Of Johannesburg Invoice:

How Does It Start?

Your municipal invoice begins with the City's billing system collecting different types of information about your property each month.

The first step is meter readings, which show how much water and electricity you have used. This uses the difference between the previous Month's reading and the current Month's reading to determine what you are charged. Sometimes, if the City cannot access your meter, an estimated reading is used based on your past usage patterns. Please visit your nearest Customer Service Centre with a dated picture of readings to dispute the estimation.

Alongside this, the City adds service charges (demand charge and network charge), which are flat rates for water and electricity availability. Should you be on prepaid for either of the services, the charges will not apply as the consumption is directly managed by the customer through unit purchases.

The invoice also includes property rates and refuse removal, which are not based on how much you consume but rather on the municipal value of your property. This means whether your bin is full or half-empty, or whether you are occupying the property or not, you still pay a fixed monthly fee.

Step 2: Once all this information — consumption readings, service charges, and property rates — has been gathered, it is compiled into your monthly invoice. The result is a statement that reflects both your actual usage and your fixed obligations as a property owner, giving you a full picture of what you owe for the month.

N.B. The billing period on your Municipal invoice always works on a cycle, which means the charges you see today are usually based on services you already used in the previous month for metered services (electricity & water). Your current invoice reflects the previous month's billing period because the City first needs to measure and calculate your usage before sending you a correct, official statement. However, the fixed services like rate, sewer and refuse are charged within the same billing Month.

Why and how is it distributed?

The City of Johannesburg distributes invoices every month to make sure residents and businesses are kept up to date about the services they use and the charges they are responsible for. This regular distribution is important because it ensures that households know exactly what they owe, while also helping the City collect the revenue needed to maintain essential services such as water, electricity, waste removal, and sanitation.

To make access as convenient as possible, invoices are shared through several channels that customers choose and monitor:

- Emailed via registered email for convenience.
- Printed and posted to your physical address.
- Available online through the COJ portal. <https://www.e-joburg.org.za/>
- Accessible at walk-in centres on request.