



Muni-Link Billing *Getting Started* Guide

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Getting Started

Introduction

Welcome to the Muni-Link Billing System. We have prepared this standard operating guide for you to follow while processing your Utility Bills.

Logging into Muni-Link Billing

There are two options that can be used to log into Muni-Link.

Muni-Link Desktop Icon:

The suggested method to log into Muni-Link is via the Muni-Link icon that was added as a short cut to your desktop during your implementation. To do this:

1. First navigate to your computers desktop, where you can see all of your icons.
2. Find the Muni-Link logo or Firefox icon that was downloaded to your desktop during your implementation or time of hire.
3. Double-click on this icon to open up the Muni-Link log-in page.
4. Once you have opened up the log-in page, enter your username and password that was established during your implementation or time of hire.
5. Click Login to access your Muni-Link software and to be directed to your dashboard. If your username and/or password are incorrect, contact your administrator or Muni-Link Customer Support for assistance.

Manually Type in Web Address:

There may be situations where the Muni-Link logo was not downloaded to your desktop or you are accessing Muni-Link from another computer. To navigate to Muni-Link when this is the case:

1. First open your *Firefox* web browser.
2. Then, in the web address at the very top of the screen, enter the web address for your authority. This is usually formatted as <https://authorityname.muni-link.com>. If you are unsure of the exact web address for your Muni-Link site, contact Customer Support, or, if possible, view the web address on another computer in your office that is logged into Muni-Link.
3. After you type in the web address, hit *Enter* on your keyboard. You will then be directed to the log-in page.
4. Once you have opened up the log-in page, enter your username and password that was established during your implementation or time of hire.
5. Click **Login** to access your Muni-Link software and to be directed to your dashboard. If your username and/or password are incorrect, contact your administrator or Muni-Link Customer Support for assistance.

The Dashboard

- The *Dashboard* is the main screen of Muni-Link. This is where you can navigate to any of the four modules. You can access the *Dashboard* from any screen in Muni-Link by clicking the Muni-

Link logo on the top-left corner of your screen. Here are a few of the items that you will see on the *Dashboard* screen:

- **My Account:** This is a quick way for you to change your first and last name, email address, or password.
- **Logout:** This button is used to log out of Muni-Link.
- **Help and Support:** This contains the contact information for Muni-Link Customer Support.
- **Account Lookup:** This is an efficient way to look up a customer in your system by Account Number, Name, House # or Street. This tool also opens the customer's Account Central page in a new tab at the top of your screen.
- **Notifications:** This is used by Muni-Link staff to inform you of important notifications, such as an update to the system or Muni-Link Webinars.
- **Announcements:** This is used to show the number of customer portal ACH and/or credit card payments that are pending processing. Also, administrators can create announcements to be displayed here for internal uses.

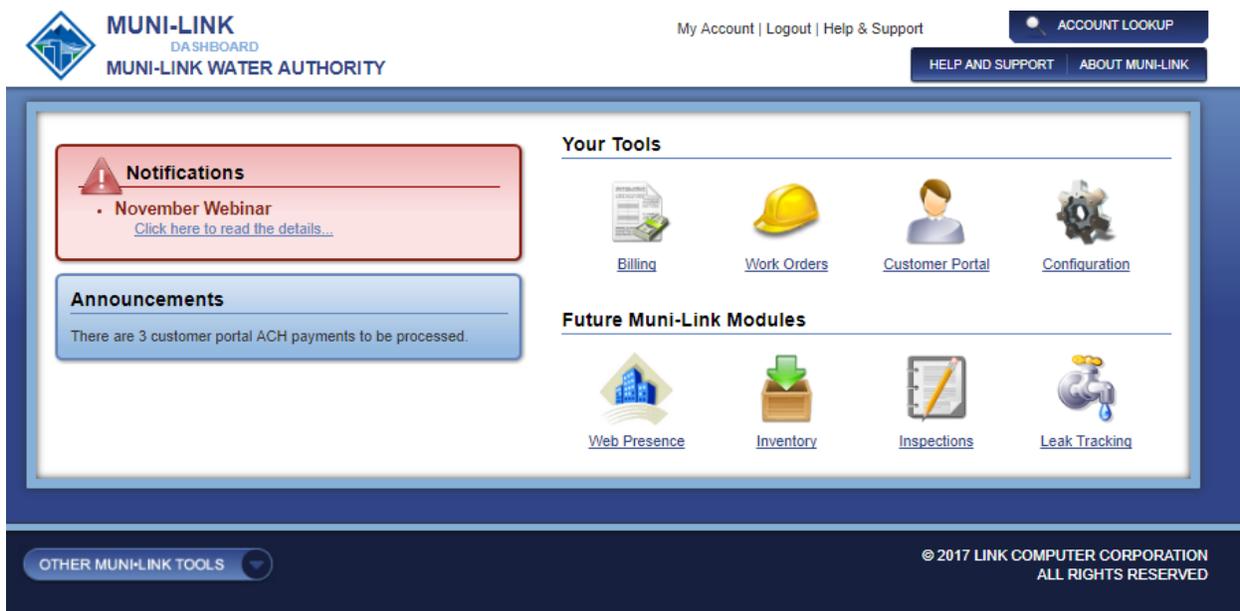


Figure 1: **Dashboard** – This is a sample of what the Muni-Link Dashboard looks like.

Your Tools

Current Modules

- **Billing:** Use this tool to search for and view accounts in detail, process bills, payments, adjustments, penalties, interest, letters, liens and reports.
- **Work Orders:** Use this tool to create and manage work orders.
- **Customer Portal:** Use this tool to manage the customer portal information such as customer email addresses, verification of e-bill enrollment, and to view credit card and/or ACH payments. You will also access this tool to generate your customer portal ACH file.

- Configuration:** This tool is used to configure available Muni-Link settings. You can manage security roles, users, set login schedules for employees, and manage settings that were set up during implementation. A majority of the settings are only accessible to Administrators and we suggest discussing any setting changes with Muni-Link staff prior to making changes.

Future Muni-Link Modules

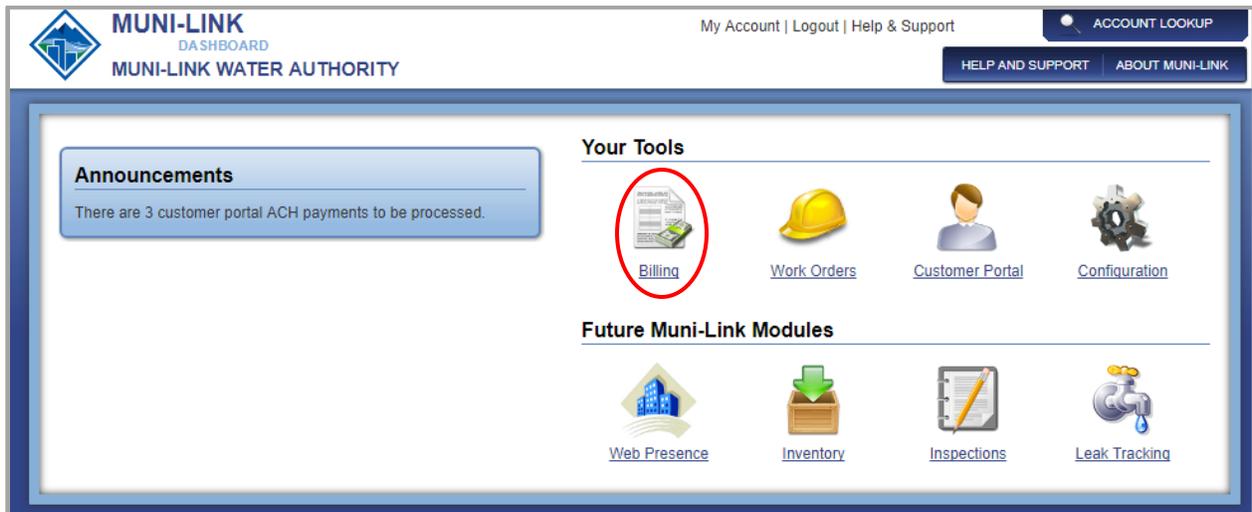
- Web Presence:** Municipal Authority specific website. This is an available module. Please contact Muni-Link Sales for more information.
- Inventory:** Keeps track of and manages inventory.
- Inspections:** Inspection and maintenance for your assets.
- Leak Tracking:** Tracks leaking information and manages a workflow associated with a leak.

Note: The future Muni-Link modules are currently in the development stage with the exception of Web Presence. Upon the release of these modules, they will be made available to you as a compliment to the Billing Software at an additional cost.

Billing Module

Billing Module Overview

The Billing module is the most utilized tool within Muni-Link. This is the centralized location for customer specific information and all processes associated with a billing cycle.



Below are the tools available to you within the Billing Module:

- Accounts:** This is the account search screen. You will be able to search for customer accounts using information that you should have available. The search options available for use are: Account Number, Name, House Number, Street Name, Route, Billing Cycle, Billing Group, and

Status. There are more detailed options available to use such as: Address 2 or Address Type. You may or may not have information in your system to allow use of these detailed search options. It will be dependent on your use of these fields on the account level. You can access these search options by clicking the “Show More” button.

2. **New account:** This is the tool to use to create a new account that currently does not exist in your database. Click on the New Account link to open up the Creating a New Account Wizard. You will navigate through this tool to create the new account. For detailed instructions on creating a new account, view the “New Account Creation” Help Card.
3. **Customers:** This is the centralized location for all customer records that are in your database. You can search for a customer record by clicking Advanced Search or create a new customer by clicking New Customer. You can view a customer record by clicking on the view icon or edit the customer record by clicking on the edit pencil.

****NOTE:** *Directly editing a customer record will change all accounts associated with the customer record.***

Meters: This is the centralized location for all meter records that are in your database. You can search for a specific meter by clicking Advanced Search or create a new meter by clicking New Meter. You can view a meter by clicking the view icon or edit a meter by clicking the edit pencil.

****NOTE:** *Any changes to an existing meter in this section WILL result in changes to that meter on the account that it is attached to.***

4. **Processing:** There are two ways to view the Processing items, hovering over the word Processing or clicking on the word Processing. If you hover over Processing, a drop down box appears with your processing items. If you click on Processing, you are directed to the Processing screen which provides you with the same processing items. The processing items are listed below:
 - **Bills:** This is the centralized location to process and manage your billings (regular, corrected, or finals). You can create a new billing cycle here, view and update and open billing cycle, or view posted cycles.
 - **Payments:** This is the centralized location to process and manage your payment, adjustment, penalty, interest or rebalancing batches. This is also the location to import payment files, such as credit card files, from outside sources.
 - **Penalties:** This is the location to generate your penalties (also called late fees). For detailed instructions on creating a penalty batch, view the “Penalties and Interest” Help Card.
 - **Interest:** This is the location to generate your interest. For detailed instructions on creating an interest batch, view the “Penalties and Interest” Help Card.
 - **Letters:** This is the centralized location to generate letter batches. The letter types available for use within this location are: Delinquent and Shutoffs, Meter Inspections, Billings Exceptions, Backflows, and Collections. For detailed instructions on creating a letter batch, view the “Delinquent Notice” Help Card.
 - **Liens:** This is the centralized location to generate lien batches in order to identify accounts that meet the criteria to have a lien placed on their property, generate lien letters, and to enter in legal information after a lien has been placed on a property.

- **AW Import:** If you are a customer that utilizes PA American Water to receive your meter readings, this is the location to import the reading files that you have obtained from PA American Water. After import, the readings are transferred to your billing cycle.
 - **Import RDGS:** Similar to PA American Water, if you receive your meter readings through another entity, this is the location to import the reading files. After import, the readings will need to be transferred to the billing cycle.
 - **Rebalance:** The Rebalance feature is used to move money across services that have a credit and applies it to services that have a debit balance. It is commonly processed before penalty or interest processing to ensure that the balances on the account are distributed so that a service is not penalized or charged interest when there is sufficient credit on the account to pay off these balances.
5. **Maintenance:** This area is used for the set up and maintenance of settings within the following categories:
- **General Settings:** Alerts, Services, Service Rate Tables, Routes, Customer Service Log Types, and Suspend Action Codes.
 - **Billing and Financial Settings:** Miscellaneous Charges, GL Accounts, Billing Groups, and Billing Cycles.
 - **Meter and Lines Settings:** Meter Types, Units of Measure, and Meter Locations.
 - **Plants and Sources Settings:** Sewer Plants, Water Plants, Sewer District, and Water District.
 - **Exports:** Create General Ledger Export and Create Address Export.
 - **Imports:** Data Import System.
 - **ACH:** Create Prenote ACH.
 - **Interest:** Create Interest Batch.
6. **Reports:** This is the area where you will find the main database of reports. The reports range from Billing and Payment reports, Consumption reports, Customer Balance reports, Demographic reports, GL reports, Meter reports, and much more. You can add a report to your favorites list by clicking on the “star” beside the name of the report. This will give you faster access to your favorite reports.

NOTE: You will need a PDF viewer to view documents and reports throughout Muni-Link (i.e. Adobe Acrobat). <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>

Accessing the Billing Process

This is the centralized location where you process your regular, corrected, or final bill cycles. To access Billing from the dashboard navigate to Billing → Processing → Bills.



You will be directed to the *Manage Cycle Reading Files* screen. The items you will see on this screen are as follows:

- **New Cycle Reading File:** This is the button you click to open a new Cycle Reading File.
- **Include Closed Cycle Reading File:** Click this checkbox to include all closed cycle reading files. If the checkbox is unchecked, the closed cycle reading files will be hidden.
- **Billing Cycle Table:** This portion of the screen includes posted and open billing cycles. A posted billing cycle is identified by the word “Posted” being displayed under the “Status” column along with a gear icon on the left side of the table. An open billing cycle is identified by the word “Open” being displayed under the “Status” column. Open billing cycles have four icons on the left side of the table: pencil, a notepad and pencil, a gear, and a trashcan. The icons have the following functionality:
 - **Pencil:** This allows you to enter an open billing cycle to edit or update any information or to resume the billing workflow.
 - **Notepad and Pencil:** This allows you to review or edit meter readings.
 - **Gear:** This allows you to continue the billing workflow for an open bill cycle or view the Readings Report, Billing Reports or Bill Print.
 - **Trash can:** This allows you to delete an open bill cycle.
- The columns following the icons are as follows:
 - **ID:** This is the identification number for each bill cycle.
 - **Cycle Type:** This will tell you if the cycle is a regular, corrected, or final bill cycle.
 - **Billing Cycle:** This will tell you the bill cycle.
 - **Description:** This will display the description that you created for the bill cycle.
 - **Bill Date:** This is the posted or anticipated post date of the bill cycle.
 - **Billing Due Date:** This is the due date or anticipated due date of the bill cycle.
 - **Pending ACH:** This will provide you with the anticipated number of ACH payments for a posted bill cycle.
 - **Status:** This will tell you if it is a posted or open billing cycle.
 - **Lock Status:** This will tell you if the bill cycle is locked or unlocked. More details about Lock Status can be found in Section: *Creating a New Billing Cycle* on page 11.
- **Go To Page:** There are ten bill cycles to a page, the remaining cycles are located on previous pages. If you need to view a previous bill cycle, you can click the “Next” button to go to the next page or click on a page number to navigate directly to that page.



Figure 2: Manage Cycle Reading Files screen

Creating a New Bill Cycle

1. From the *Manage Cycle Reading Files* screen, click on the **New Cycle Reading File** button.



2. Complete the criteria in the *Create Cycle Reading File* Screen:
 - **Cycle Type:** The default Cycle Type is *Regular* so no action is needed if creating a regular monthly/quarterly bill cycle. If creating a corrected bill cycle, click the drop down box and choose *Corrected*. If creating a final bill cycle, click the drop down box and choose *Final*. For detailed instructions on creating a final bill cycle, view the “Finalization in a Batch” Help Card.
 - **Billing Cycle:** Click the drop down box and click on the billing cycle that you are going to bill.
 - **Billing Group:** The default will be your main billing group. If you have more than one billing group, you will click the drop down box and click on the billing group that you are going to bill.
 - **Description:** Type in a short description of the bill cycle you are creating. **Examples:** Jan 2017 Billing; Quarterly Billing for Jan-Mar
 - **Billing Date:** Enter in the projected bill date. This will be both the bill posting date and the date that is printed on the bills. This date can be adjusted at any point prior to calculating the bills.
 - **Billing Due Date:** Enter in the due date of the bill. This date can be adjusted at any point prior to calculating the bills.

- **Billing Discount Date:** This field is *optional* and should only be used if you offer an early pay discount. If you do offer an early pay discount, enter in the discount date.
- **Bill/Notice Shutoff Date:** This field is *optional* and should only be used if you display a delinquent or shut off date on your bill. If you do list a delinquent/shut off date on your bills, enter in that date.
- **Lock Status:** The default status is unlocked. The lock status will automatically update and will lock after the bills are calculated. The purpose of the Lock Status is to eliminate the ability to post any other transactions after the bills have been calculated and prior to posting. The lock is in place from the time the bills are calculated until the bills are posted. Upon bill posting, the cycle will automatically update and will unlock.
- **# of Readings and # of Suspended Readings:** These boxes will be greyed out and are non-editable fields. Once the billing cycle is created, the number of readings and the number of suspended readings will be displayed in these boxes.

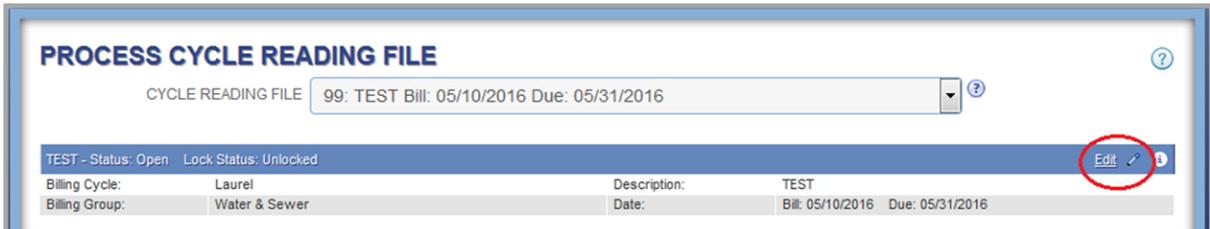
3. Click the **Create** button to create the bill cycle.

NOTE: If you click “cancel” the creation of the bill cycle will be cancelled and all information entered will be lost.

Edit Service From and To Dates

After the creation of the bill cycle you will be directed to the *Process Cycle Reading File* screen. Your first step is to edit your *service from* and *service to* dates. You will follow the steps below to edit these dates:

1. On the blue bar going across the top middle of your screen click **Edit** or the *pencil icon* on the right side.



2. You are directed to the *Update Cycle Reading File* screen. The top portion of the screen contains all the criteria used when creating your bill cycle.
3. Scroll down to the *Routes* section and enter the *Service From* date (ending date of the previous service period) and *Service To* date (ending date of this service period). The *Service From* should default from your last posted bill cycle. However, if this is the first bill cycle being processed in Muni-Link then it may be possible that the default date will be incorrect and you will need to manually update it to the correct date. All routes need to have these two fields (*Service From* and *Service To*) completed prior to calculating bills. This date range must reflect your entire monthly, bi-monthly or quarterly billing period.

Routes [?](#)

Select	Title	Description	Service From ?	Service To ?	# of Readings	Processing Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	Training Route		06/01/2017	06/30/2017	9	FORM FILE READ EST REP CALC

NOTE: If you use reading dates as your service dates, these will update once you've imported your reading files.

- Once you have entered your *Service From* and *Service To* dates, click the **Save** button.

Routes [?](#)

Select	Title	Description	Service From ?	Service To ?	# of Readings	Processing Status
<input type="checkbox"/>	Training Route		06/01/2017	06/30/2017	9	FORM FILE READ EST REP CALC

- You will be directed back to the *Process Cycle Reading File* screen.
- The *Process Cycle Reading File* is the actual billing process workflow. You are provided with guidance on which process button you should be choosing. You will see the phrase "Suggested Next Step" listed on the process button that Muni-Link believes should be your next step. You may or may not use every button in the workflow.

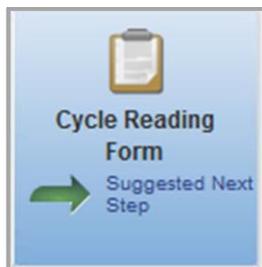
Cycle Reading Form

The *Cycle Reading Form* is your first step in the workflow. This button should be processed at the start of your cycle as well as anytime any account changes (meter changes/finalizations) that may occur between the times that you start your bill cycle and calculate your bills. The Cycle Reading Form is a dual use tool as outlined below:

- It is a tool for those who obtain their meter readings with pen and paper. A PDF report is populated which provides a list of all metered accounts within the cycle. The report has a blank column for current readings so it can be printed and used to hand write meter readings.
- The most important use is to ensure that changes that have been made since the last billing have been updated within the current bill cycle (i.e. meter exchange)

How to process your Cycle Reading Form:

- Click on the *Cycle Reading Form* button.



- You will receive a confirmation pop up box. Click *Continue* to proceed or *Cancel* to return to the *Process Cycle Reading File* screen.

Tip:

- It is recommended that if you have metered accounts that you always run the *Cycle Reading Form* even if you have no need for the actual report.
- You will see a processing box while this step is running, when the process is finished you will receive a PDF titled ***Cycle Reading Data Entry Form.pdf***. Click *Open File*, choose *Adobe Reader* and click *OK* to view and print the report. If you do not need the report, click *Cancel* to close this box. You will now see a green checkmark displayed on the *Cycle Reading Form* box.

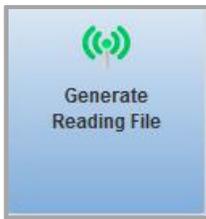
Generate Reading File

Generate Reading File is how you obtain the meter reading file that you will import into your reading software to start the meter reading process.

How to Generate your Reading File:

On the *Process Cycle Reading File* screen you will navigate to the button labeled *Generate Reading File*.

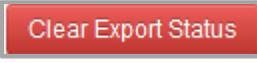
- Click on the *Generate Reading File* button.



- A pop up box, *Generate Reading Files*, will be displayed and will provide you with several different export options. Your export options are as follows:

- Custom Export:  This option is used if you need to combine two or more routes into one reading file and only if you are not exporting all routes together. For example, if you have six routes but only read two routes at a time, you can use the custom export to receive one reading file per set of two routes.
- Export All Routes:  The export all routes is used if you are downloading all routes to one reading file or using the Muni-Link Mobile Meter Reader App. When you click on the Export All Routes button, you are prompted to either Generate Mobile Meter Reader File or Download Reading File. Your reading file will be generated to include all of your routes. If you use the Download Readings File option, you will be provided with a .txt file that you will save and load into your meter reading software as instructed by your meter reading software company.
- Export Routes One by One:  This option is used if you are downloading only one route at a time. Click on the blue export button on the right of the route that you would like to export. You will be provided with a .txt file for the chosen route that you will save and load into your meter reading software as

instructed by your meter reading software company. The chosen route will turn green and a green checkmark will now be displayed on the left of the route number. Repeat for remaining routes when ready to read each route.

- **Clear Export Status:** 

If you need to clear your exports and restart the export process, click on the Clear Export Status button. This will clear any green check marks on previously exported routes and will restore all routes back to their non-exported status.

3. Select the appropriate export option and generate the reading file. Open the .txt file and save to the designated location on your computer. Close the .txt file and click *Close* on the Generate Readings File box.

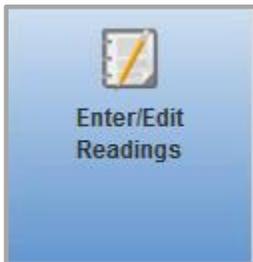
Note: If you hand read your meters or obtain all meter readings from a 3rd party, you will skip the *Generate Reading Files* step.

Enter/Edit Readings

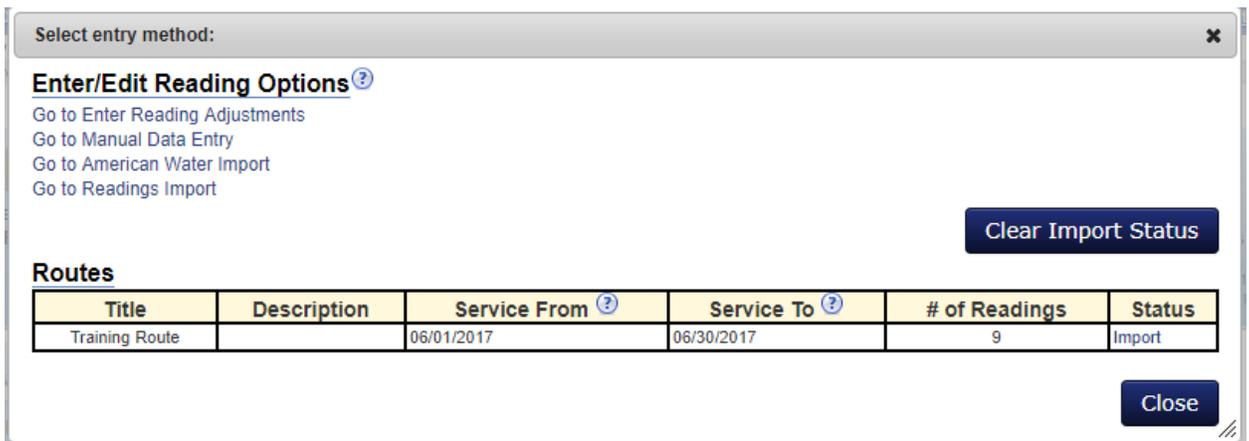
Enter/Edit Readings is how you can review, manually enter and/or update meter readings.

Enter/Edit Readings

1. Click on *Enter/Edit Readings* button.



2. A pop up box called *Enter/Edit Readings* will be displayed and will provide you with several different *Enter/Edit Readings* options.



The screenshot shows a pop-up window titled "Select entry method:". Inside, there is a section "Enter/Edit Reading Options" with four links: "Go to Enter Reading Adjustments", "Go to Manual Data Entry", "Go to American Water Import", and "Go to Readings Import". A "Clear Import Status" button is located to the right. Below this is a "Routes" table with one row of data.

Title	Description	Service From	Service To	# of Readings	Status
Training Route		06/01/2017	06/30/2017	9	Import

At the bottom right of the window is a "Close" button.

3. Your Enter/Edit Reading options are as follows:

- Go to Enter Reading Adjustments:** This option allows you to view, enter or update a meter reading for an individual account. It will allow you to enter the account number to display the meter information. You can then add or change the current meter reading, reading date and/or reading type.

Enter Reading Adjustments: TEST DO NOT DELETE

ACCOUNT NUMBER

MUNICIPALITY

ROUTE

SERVICE FROM

SERVICE TO

Adjust Meter Readings

Readings Reviewed:

Meter #	Previous Reading	Current Reading	Reading Date	Reading Type	Usage Override <input style="font-size: 8px; vertical-align: middle;" type="button" value="Q"/>	Notes
No results found.						

[Add New Meter Reading to Cycle](#)

Note: If a meter exchange was processed prior or during the bill cycle, it is recommended to use this option to review readings and usage for both meters

- Go to Manual Data Entry:** This option allows you to view, enter, or edit reading for all accounts within the cycle on a page-by-page basis. There are 20 accounts per page and you can navigate through pages from the top or bottom of the screen. Accounts will be in route and sequence order.

CYCLE READING DATA ENTRY

Go to Page:

Note: Page numbers correspond to the pages on the cycle reading data entry report. If this report has not been generated, all entries will be listed on page 1.

Page 1: Total of 9 readings

#	Account #	Route	Seq #	Name	Meter #	Previous Reading	Current Reading	Reading Date	Reading Time	Reading Type	Usage Override <input style="font-size: 8px; vertical-align: middle;" type="button" value="Q"/>	Notes Other
1	28-0	Training Route	0	Violet Hatfield	24000	549	598	06/30/2017	12:00 PM	Estimate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Q"/>
2	29-0	Training Route	0	Party Pieceal (Party Supply Store)	26000	5970	5976	06/30/2017	12:00 PM	Estimate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Q"/>
3	32-0	Training Route	0	Volunteer Fire Station #974	26000	0	0	06/30/2017	12:00 PM	Estimate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Q"/>
5	41-0	Training Route	0	Doug Paris	7777888899999999	5994	8488	06/30/2017	12:00 PM	Estimate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Q"/>
6	43-1	Training Route	0	Sarah L Smith	2222est	80000	80002	06/30/2017	12:00 PM	Estimate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Q"/>
7	44-1	Training Route	0	Marcus Phillips	12354685	9949	9951	06/30/2017	12:00 PM	Estimate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Q"/>
8	52-0	Training Route	0	Taylor Smith	Test1000	0	267	06/30/2017	12:00 PM	Estimate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Q"/>
9	26-0	Training Route	0	Samantha Sweltzer	Test2000	0	401	06/30/2017	12:00 PM	Estimate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Q"/>
4	40-0	Training Route	450	Mickey Mouse	456321	400	500	06/30/2017	12:00 PM	Estimate	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Q"/>

- Go to American Water Import:** This option is only for users that import readings from PA American Water. When clicking this option, you are directed to a screen to enter in the reading date range to complete the reading import for this date range.

Select the reading dates for when you would like to update the cycle readings.

FROM READING DATE: TO READING DATE:

[Create Readings](#) [Cancel](#)

- Go to Readings Import:** This option is only for users that import readings from a 3rd party other than PA American Water. When clicking this option, you are directed to a screen to enter in the reading date range to complete the reading import for the date range.

READING IMPORT [RETURN TO MAINTENANCE](#)

IMPORT FORMAT *

OVERRIDE READING DATE

CYCLE *

FILE

[Upload File](#) [Cancel](#)

Note: Import of the PA American Water or other 3rd party file is actually completed in *Processing* → *Import RDGS*.

- Importing Reads:** This option allows you to import your readings file from your meter reader software. If you are importing one file with all of your meter readings, you can click on the import button under *Status* beside any route. Repeat this process if you are importing one file per route. If you are importing two or more routes that you set up as a custom export in the previous step, you can click on the import button beside your first route to import the file. Repeat this step for any remaining custom files by using the next route on the list. After you finish importing your file(s), you will receive either a green check mark if the file was imported without errors or a red X if the file was imported with errors. If you have errors, you will be directed to the Cycle Reading Import Completion Summary screen that will provide you information on your errors.

Routes					
Title	Description	Service From [?]	Service To [?]	# of Readings	Status
Laurel	Laurel Drive Cycle	03/23/2016		13	Import

Note: You may receive import errors due to a missing or incorrect ECR/MXU number, the incorrect file is being imported, or a meter on the file is not in the billing cycle.

- **Clear Import Status:** This provides you with the option to clear the green checkmarks and red X's from your routes.



Note: Clearing the import status will only clear the Import Status, not the actual readings**

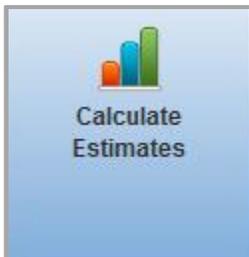
4. Upon the completion of the above steps, click **Close** to return back to the *Process Cycle Reading File*.

Calculate Estimates

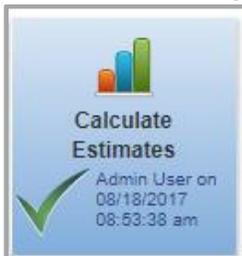
This option is used to estimate readings for any account that did not obtain an actual meter reading. The estimate is based on an average of a specified number of actual readings. The number of actual readings to be averaged was established during your implementation. This option can also be used to estimate complete billing cycles. It is recommended that you complete this step in every billing cycle to ensure that readings are applied to all accounts within the cycle. This function will not override any actual readings and should be executed after all actual readings have been imported or entered into the cycle.

Note: It is recommended that you review your Readings Report for missed readings prior to running the *Calculate Estimates* option. For instructions on running your Readings Report, navigate to page Section: *Running the Readings Report* located on Page 17.

1. Click on the *Calculate Estimates* button.



2. A pop up box called *Confirm Calculate Estimates* will be displayed.
3. Click *Continue* to calculate estimates for this cycle readings file. Click *Cancel* to cancel the calculate estimate function and return to the *Process Cycle Reading File*.
4. When all estimates have been calculated, you will be returned to the *Process Cycle Reading File*. You will now see a green checkmark displayed on your *Calculate Estimates* button.



Note: The *Calculate Estimates* process could take several minutes to complete depending on how many accounts are being estimated.

- You can view the accounts that estimates were applied to and the estimated usage and estimated reading. Click on the Green Checkmark that appeared after estimates were calculated. You will be directed to the *Estimate Report Screen* to review. Click *Return to Cycle Reading Workflow* to return to the *Process Cycle Reading File*.

Estimate Report - APR BILLING CYCLE 1 ?

[Return to Cycle Reading Workflow](#)
[Print This Report](#)

Date: 03/24/2017 02:38:42 pm
 Estimate Type: Prior Usage
 Estimate Cycles: 14

Estimates

Route	Account	Prev Read	Period 1	Period 2	Period 3	Est Usage	Est Read
ROUTE BOOK 100	10017700-1	2182(A)	3000 (A)	3500 (A)	2600 (A)	3000	2212

[Return to Cycle Reading Workflow](#)

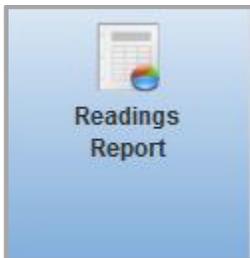
Readings Report

The **Readings Report** is the tool to easily identify issues with readings. Be sure to review the report carefully.

(ie. High readings, low readings, no readings, etc.)

Running the Readings Report

- Click on the *Readings Report* button.



- A pop up box called *Readings Report Options* will be displayed.

Readings Report Options

Readings Report Options ?

REPORT TYPE: Report

ROUTE: All Routes

SHOW IN REPORT: Exceptions Only

SORT BY: Route & Account

USAGE UOM: Service UOM

INCLUDE PREVIOUS READINGS:

INCLUDE REVIEWED EXCEPTIONS:

INCLUDE READING NOTES:

INCLUDE SERVICE ADDRESS:

INCLUDE METER ECR #:

INCLUDE MXU #:

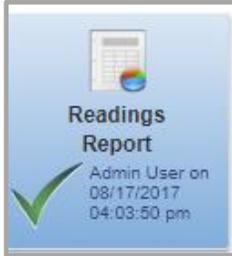
Submit Cancel

3. While on this screen you have several options for obtaining the information. The options are as follows:

- **Report Type**– Report type allows you to select how you would like to download the *Readings Report*. The available options are:
 - **Report** – When selected, the report will be presented to you as a PDF file.
 - **Screen** – When selected, reading exceptions will immediately display on your screen as opposed to being in a file format.
 - **CSV Export** – When selected, the report will be presented to you as a CSV file.
- **Route** – You can run the report for the default of *All Routes* or you can choose an individual route from the drop down box.
- **Show in Report** – This is where you choose what you want to show in this report. The default is *Exceptions Only*. You can change what is displayed in the report by choosing another option in the drop down box.
- **Sort By** – This is how your information will be sorted on the report.
- **Usage UOM** – Usage UOM (Usage Unit of Measurement) may be displayed by *Service UOM* or *Reading UOM*
- **Additional Information:** There are options available to include additional information on the report. If you want this extra information, click the checkbox beside the following options:
 - Include Previous Readings
 - This option will include all previous readings
 - Include Reviewed Exceptions
 - This option will include any accounts that have been reviewed and corrections made to reading or usage. Otherwise, once reviewed and corrected the account will no longer display on the report.
 - Include Reading Notes
 - Include Service Address
 - Include Meter ECR #
 - Include MXU #

4. Click *Submit* to generate your *Readings Report*.

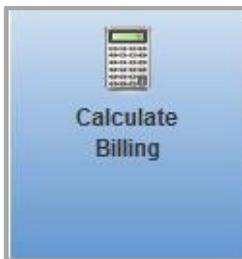
- You will receive the report as you specified under Report Type: PDF, CSV or Screen.
Note: If you chose PDF or CSV, you will be prompted to *Save* or *Open* the file.
- You will be returned to the *Process Cycle Reading File* screen and you will now have a green checkmark on the *Readings Report* button.



Calculate Billing

This is the step where the billing calculations actually take place. Once this step is complete, your billing cycle will be locked and any other transaction batches may be entered but will be prevented from being posted. Here is how to run the *Calculate Billing* Step:

- Click on the *Calculate Billing* button.



- A confirmation pop up box will be displayed. The confirmation box also mentions that the cycle reading file will be locked. Click *Continue* to proceed or *Cancel* if you are not ready to calculate bills at this time.

Lock Status: **Locked**

- Lock Status:** The locked status is a precaution to ensure that no other transactions are posted to any accounts within the open billing cycle as that would cause a discrepancy with what is going to print on the bill. You can manually unlock the cycle by navigating to the edit button on the *Process Cycle Reading File* screen. You must recalculate the bills after the cycle has been unlocked.

- Another pop up box called *Calculate Billing Options* will be displayed. You are provided with the option of calculating *All Bills*, *Bills with Changes or Errors*, or a *Single Bill*.

- All Bills:** Calculates all bills for all accounts within the cycle.

Note: It is required to calculate *All Bills* in order to post the billing cycle.

- Bills with Changes or Errors:** This option is to be used after you have calculated using the option *All Bills*. If you make any changes to any accounts within the open cycle, this

is an efficient way to recalculate the changes without recalculating all of the bills within the cycle.

- **Single Bills:** This option calculates a bill for a single account only. When choosing this option, you will be required to enter the account number of the account that you want to calculate a bill for.
4. After selecting your option on how to calculate the bills, click the **Submit** button. The system will then run through the process of calculating your bills, this step could take several minutes.
 5. After the system has completed the calculations, you will encounter one of three different calculation statuses.



- **Green Checkmark:**

This means that all bills that you have calculated are free from errors and you are able to move on to the next step in your process.



- **Red X (Error):**

The *Red X* indicates that there are accounts that have errors and a review and correction of the errors will be required in order for an accurate bill to be produced. Errors need to be addressed before moving any further within the billing cycle. All errors can be viewed by clicking directly on the *Red X*. You will be directed to the *Billing Calculation Error* screen.

Billing Calculation Errors - test ?

[Return to Cycle Reading Workflow](#)

Errors were encountered when running billing calculations. Please correct the errors and try running the billing calculations again.

Cycle Reading File: test

Errors

Account	Address	Service	Error
(4) 2-0 Tony Link (Adjust Readings)	(4) 124 Main St, Bellwood, PR 18617		The bill service from date is after the service to date. Check the reading dates and the account start date.
(4) 2-0 Tony Link (Adjust Readings)	(4) 124 Main St, Bellwood, PR 18617	(2) Water	Error in 259 Calculate billing for service address Saving billing reading: readingtype: Current Reading Type cannot be blank. Value:!!

[Return to Cycle Reading Workflow](#)



- **Yellow Exclamation Point (Warning):**

The *Yellow Exclamation Point* indicates that there accounts that need your attention. These warnings may be justified and as long as you are aware of the warning and you have verified that it is not something that requires a change, then it is acceptable to move on in the billing cycle. All warnings can be viewed by clicking on the *Yellow Exclamation Point*.

Reason for Red X Errors

There are many reasons that a *Red X* error could appear in your *Calculate Billing* step. Below are some common error reasons and the potential solution. These errors may vary due to the configurations in your system.

Note: If you proceed without resolving an error, the error may prevent the account from billing or may lead to an incorrect bill.

- **Billing Date Error:** You may get an error like the following example: *Account 1-0 has transaction posted on 01/01/2016 at 8:00 AM. Billing Date must be after this date.* This error means that the billing date or time is before another posted transaction to an account within this cycle. Navigate to the Edit Pencil and update the billing date and/or time to reflect a date/time after the one provided in the error message.
- **Could not find a meter reading entry for this service:** This error indicates that there is not a meter reading entered for the account. To enter a reading, simply click on the Adjust Readings button next to the account in this error page, or navigate to Enter/Edit Readings.
- **Route does not have default Service To Date:** This error indicates that there is a route in your cycle that does not have a valid Service To date. Navigate to the Edit Pencil and enter the missing *Service To* date and click **Save Changes**. Then click the *Calculate Billing* button again to correct this error.

Reason for Warnings

There is one common warning that may occasionally appear within your cycle, especially when processing your first few billing cycles. One common warning is:

- **Gap in Service Dates:** This warning indicates that there is a gap in the service period between the Service To date on the last bill for the account and the Service From date on the current billing cycle. This warning is letting you know that there may be a time frame that you did not bill this customer. Moving past this warning will still provide the customer with a bill, but it is recommended that you verify that this warning is justified before you proceed.

Note: Accounts with warnings **WILL be billed**, unlike accounts with errors.

Billing Reports

The *Billing Report* is the tool to use to review your service calculations. There are several reports available to you within the *Billing Reports*.

1. Click on the *Billing Reports* button.



Note: *Billing Reports* can only be generated AFTER you have calculated the bills.

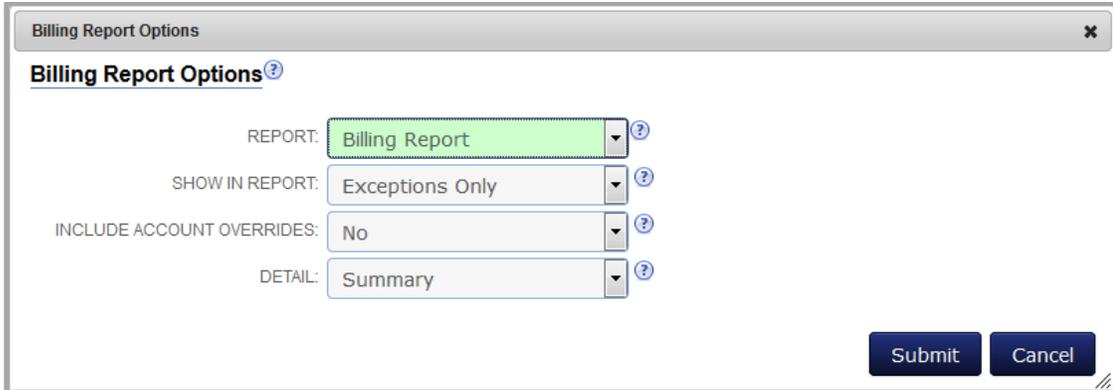
2. A pop up box called *Billing Report Options* will appear. The reports and their criteria are as follows:
 - **Billing Report:** Shows information about the bill calculations.
 - **Show in Report:** This allows you to select the type of information that you would like to be displayed on the report. The options are as follows:
 - **Exceptions Only:** This option will include bills that have errors or unusual results
 - **All Bills:** This option will include all bills within the billing cycle
 - **Leak Detected Only:** This option will show bills that had a leak detected in the readings when running the bill calculation.
 - **Usage Only:** This option will show bills that are usage only bills. These are the bills that would generate to record the usage but generate a zero dollar billed amount.
 - **Include Account Overrides:** This allows you to include accounts that have an override set on the service.
 - **Detail:** This allows you to select the level of detail that you want to display in the report. The options are as follows:
 - **Summary:** This option will display a summary list of charges on each bill.
 - **Detail:** This option will display the actual calculation that took place along with the charges on each bill.

Note: We recommend running the Billing Report using *All Bills* and *Summary* to check the grand total being billed to ensure that the total falls within your normal billing range.
 - **Billing Printlist:** Shows a list of the bills that will be printed.
 - **Sort By:** Choose to sort by Postal Delivery (zip code), or Account Number.
 - **Output As:** Report generates a PDF report, and CSV generates an Excel file.
 - **Bill Types:** Using the check boxes, choose which type or types of bills to include (regular bills, copy bills, final bills, etc.).
 - **Billing Detail Report:** Shows a list of the bills by meters and readings, broken down by reporting group and penalties.
 - **Single Bill:** This option prints a Billing Report for an individual account.
 - **Bill #:** This option allows you to enter the bill number that you want to print. Leave blank if you do not know the bill number and proceed to the Account # field.

- **Account Number:** This option allows you to enter the account number that you want to print. You can also use the blue magnify glass icon to search for the account by name, house number and/or street name.
- **Detail:** This allows you to select the level of detail that you want to display in the report.
 - **Summary:** This option will display a summary list of charges on each bill.
 - **Detail:** This option will display the actual calculation that took place along with the charges on each bill.
- **Transaction Report:** Shows the GL transactions that will be made when the bills are posted.
 - **Include:** This allows you to select the level of detail that you want to display in the report.
 - **Full Report:** This will display a full listing of all transactions with a summary at the end of the report.
 - **Summary Only:** This will display only the summary totals by service, route, address type and GL account distribution.

Note: We recommend running the *Transaction Report* using the *Summary Only* option. You will receive a breakdown of what is being billed and the GL distribution of the current billing cycle. (This is a great report for your accountants.)

- **ACH Report:** Shows the expected ACH transactions from the bills in the billing cycle.
 - **Include:** This allows you to select the level of detail that you want to display in the report.
 - **Full Report:** This will display a full listing of all transactions with a summary at the end of the report.
 - **Summary Only:** This will display only the summary totals by service, route, address type and GL account distribution.
- **Calculation List:** Shows the service addresses that will have bills calculated for this batch.
 - **Output As:** *Report* generates a PDF report, and *CSV* generates an Excel file.
 - **Calculation Type:** This option allows you to choose which type of bills you would like to include
 - **All Bills:** Includes the service address for all accounts within the billing cycle.
 - **Bills with Changes or Errors:** Includes only the service addresses for bills that had changes or errors that required those bills to be recalculated.
- **Variance Report:** Shows a list of bills that have the greatest difference between the current billing and the previous billing. The report will only show the top 30 accounts with the greatest differences.



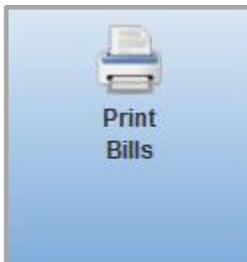
3. After selecting the report and the criteria, click the **Submit** button. The report will generate, prompting a dialog box to pop upon your screen prompting you to either *Open* or *Save* the report.

Note: Billing Reports are available to you at any point after calculating the bills and will remain available even after the bills are posted.

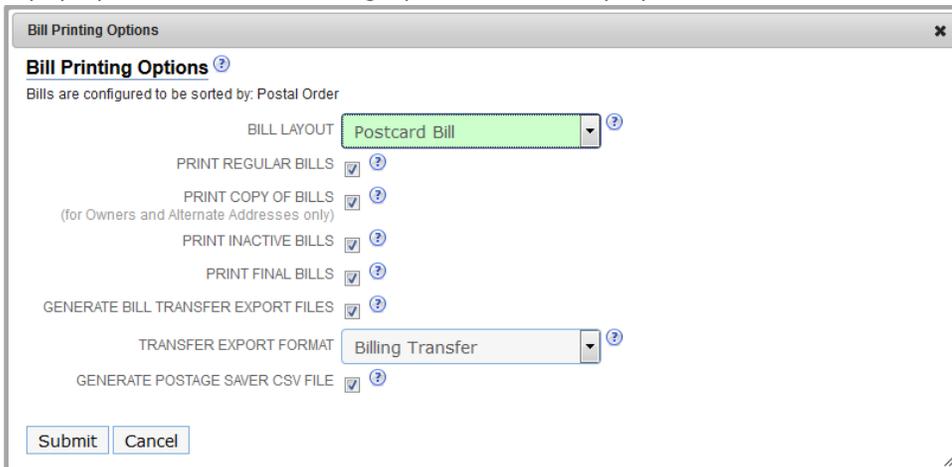
Print Bills

Print Bills is the tool to use to generate your bill print or bill print file.

1. Click on the *Print Bills* button.



2. A pop up box called *Bill Printing Options* will be displayed.



- **Bill Layout:** Select the bill layout that will be used to print the bills. If you send a file to a 3rd party bill printer, you will choose the CSV export.

Note: This normally defaults to the bill layout that is configured for the billing group.

- **Print Regular Bills:** This box should be checked to include all regular bills within the billing cycle (This should always be checked to send bills to the bill to on an account).
- **Print Copy of Bills:** This box should be checked to include copies of bills for owners and alternate addresses.

Note: These are considered duplicate bills in your bill print report.

- **Print Inactive Bills:** This box should be checked to include bills for service addresses that are set to inactive but normally would be part of the billing cycle. If the inactive service address has a non-zero balance then a bill will be generated.

Note: When using this option, a document is created but an actual bill is not posted to the account.

- **Print Final bills:** This box should be checked to include Final Bills that have not yet been printed. This only includes bills that have been posted but not printed through the Finalization process on Account Central.

Note: The service address for final bills may normally be billed in a different billing cycle, but can be printed in the current bill cycle you're working in.

- **Generate Bill Transfer Export Files:** This box should be checked to include calculating billing transfers. These are charges that are transferred from one account to another account, also known as Master Billing (An export file and a report for this will be generated if checked).
- **Transfer Export Format:** This option allows you to select the format for the transfer export file. The default format is called *Billing Transfer* but different formats can be created if necessary.
- **Generate Postage Saver CSV File:** This box should be checked to generate a Postage Saver CSV file, which is used in the Postage Saver software. The Postage Saver software is used to generate tray labels and a Postal Qualification report.

Note: This program is not included with Muni-Link and must be purchased separately. The need for this program will be based on individual Post Office requirements.

3. Once you have all your options selected, click **Submit** to generate your bill print file. Once complete, a green check mark will appear on the *Print Bills* button.

Note: The bills will not automatically print when processing the *Print Bills* step.



4. Click directly on the green check mark on the *Print Bills* button.
5. You will be directed to the **Bill Print Report** screen.
6. Click on the blue link beside **Bill Output Files** and the number of bills to obtain the PDF of the bills or CSV file. If you are using our eBill feature, you will see the total number of eBills along with a blue link called **Print eBill Report**. This report will provide you with a list of accounts who will be receiving an eBill instead of a paper bill. If you are using the Postage Save program, you will see a blue link similar to your bill print link directly across from **Postgage Saver CSV File**. Click this blue link to obtain your Postage Saver file to save and import into your Postage Saver program.

Note: You will also be given a zip code break down towards the bottom of the *Bill Print Report* screen.

Bill Print Report - Billing Test

[Return to Cycle Reading Workflow](#)

[Print This Report](#)

Date: 08/10/2017 03:42:07 pm

Bill print was run by: Admin User on 08/10/2017 03:43:21 pm

Bill Output Files:

From 1 thru 197 --> [highland_billprint 598cb7597b4db07f614c7af9](#)

Total of 2 EBills: [Print EBill Report](#)

Postage Saver Files:

Postage Saver CSV File: [highland_billprint 598cb7597b4db07f614c7afd](#)

Bill sorting: Postal Order

Regular Bills: 1 to 197

7. Once you review your bills on the PDF, you may proceed to printing them on your card stock.
8. If you are sending a CSV file to a 3rd party bill printer, you will open the file and save it to a location on your computer. You will then submit this file to the 3rd party printer electronically in the manner that they have specified to you.

Tip: This is the last step before posting your billing cycle. Be sure to review your bills to ensure that everything is correct before you start printing so as not to waste paper, ink, etc.

Post Billing

Post Billing is the tool to use to post the billing and usage transactions to the accounts within the billing cycle.

How to Post Billing

1. Click on the *Post Billing* button.



2. A pop up box called *Confirm Posting Date* will appear.
3. You will be prompted with 2 options: If you click on *Continue* the billing cycle will be posted for the date and time indicated in the pop up box. If you click on *Cancel* it will take you back to the *Process Cycle Reading File* without posting the bills.
4. Click *Continue*, once the posting is complete you will be returned to the *Process Cycle Reading File* page and a **green check mark** will appear on the *Post Billing* button.



Note: Once the billing cycle is posted it **cannot be unposted** and some steps cannot be redone.

Send eBill Notifications

If you are using our eBill feature and you have customers signed up to receive an *ebill*, you will want to send the eBills immediately after posting your bills. This process will send an email to all enrolled customers with either a PDF copy of their bill or instructions for logging into the customer portal to retrieve their bill.

Note: You will see this option in the workflow only if you have eBills enabled.

How to Send eBill Notifications via the Billing Cycle

1. Click on the *Send eBill Notifications* button.



2. A pop up box called *Confirm Email eBill* will appear.
3. You will be prompted with two options:
 - *Continue* – which allows you to proceed to the next step in the process.
 - *Cancel* – which will direct you back to the *Process Cycle Reading File* without completing the process.
4. Click *Continue*, you will receive another pop up box called *Email eBills Options*. You will be given the option to either send a test eBill (so you can view) or send Actual eBills (which sends the email out to all customers signed up for eBills.).

The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Email eBills Options". Inside, there is a section titled "Email eBills" with a help icon. Below this, there are two fields: "SEND:" with a dropdown menu currently showing "Test EBill", and "TEST EMAIL ADDRESS" with a text input field containing "test@muni-link.com". Both fields have help icons. At the bottom right, there are two buttons: "Submit" and "Cancel".

Note: When sending a test eBill, a PDF copy of a bill will not be attached. It is just a verification that the emails are being sent correctly and to provide a clear picture to you as to what the email actually looks like.

The screenshot shows the same "Email eBills Options" dialog box. In this instance, the "SEND:" dropdown menu is set to "Actual E Bills". The "TEST EMAIL ADDRESS" field is empty. The "Submit" and "Cancel" buttons remain at the bottom right.

5. When using either option, click the **Submit** button to send the email(s).
6. Once the eBill(s) are processed you will be brought back to the *Process Cycle Reading File* and a green check mark will appear on the *Send eBill Notifications* button.

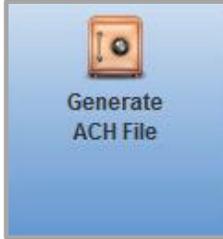
Note: Customers can enroll for eBilling through the Customer Portal or you can enroll them through Account Central.

Generate ACH File

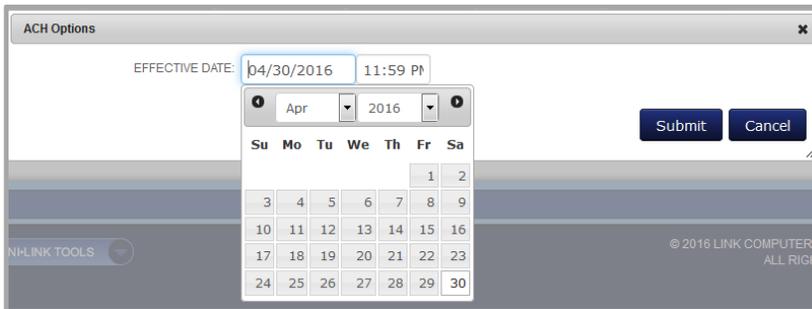
If you are using our ACH AutoPay feature, you will generate the ACH file directly from the Billing Cycle. You **DO NOT** want to generate the ACH file until 1-3 days prior to the due date in order for the payments to be withdrawn from their bank accounts on the due date of the bill. The bank will let you know how many days in advance that you should submit your file to them.

How to Generate ACH file

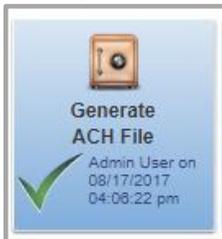
1. Click on the *Generate ACH File* button.



2. A pop up box called *ACH Options* will appear.
3. You will choose an *Effective Date*, which will be the date that you want the bank to withdrawal the funds.



4. Click **Submit**.
5. A .txt file will be generated, which you will save to your computer to be uploaded to the bank, and a green check mark will appear on the *Generate ACH File* button.

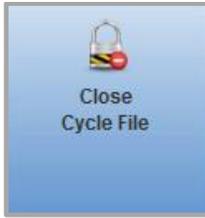


6. Once the ACH file is generated, a payment batch will be created (located under Processing > Payments). **DO NOT** post this payment batch until you've uploaded the ACH file to the bank and are sure that you do not have any errors.

Close the Cycle

Closing the billing cycle is the final step in the workflow. You **DO NOT** want to close the bill cycle until you have completed **ALL** processes, such as generating the ACH file, running penalties, interest, etc. **We do not recommend closing a billing cycle for at least the first year of being live in Muni-Link.**

1. Click on the *Close Cycle File* button.



2. A pop up box called *Confirm Close* will appear.
3. You will be prompted with two options:
 - *Continue* – Click on the *Continue* button to close out the billing cycle
 - *Cancel* – Click on the *Cancel* button to return to the *Process Cycle Reading File* screen.
4. Click *Continue* to close the cycle and to be redirected back to the *Process Cycle Reading File* screen. You will notice that everything other than *Reading* and *Billing Reports* are now grayed out.
5. You will not be able to run any actions against this billing cycle and it no longer will show on your list of billing cycles on the *Manager Cycle Reading Files* screen.

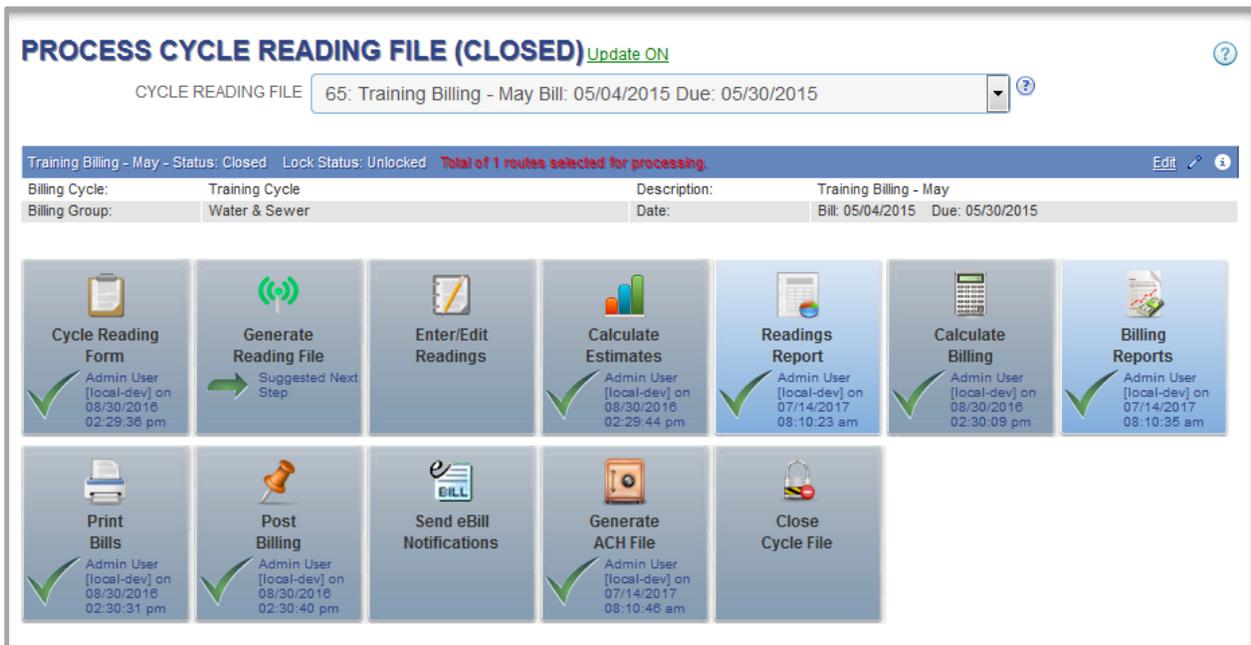


Figure 3: Process Cycle Reading File (Closed)

Contacting the Muni-Link Billing Support Team

How to Reach Us:

Included with the purchase of **Muni-Link Billing** is unlimited Customer Support. If you need assistance, please contact the **Muni-Link | Billing** support team at **(814) 822-1212** or via email at support@muni-link.com.

Our Business Hours:

Monday – Friday; 8:00AM – 5:00PM Eastern Time

Emergency After-Hours Contact Information:

Call (814) 822-1212 to reach the Muni-Link answering service. A representative will take all of your information and will relay it to a designated Customer Support representative. You will receive a response in a timely manner.