

WHAT'S ON TAP



NEWS FOR DC WATER CUSTOMERS • FALL ISSUE



Emergency management— protecting DC Water and you in an emergency

Unrest at the capitol. A hurricane roaring towards the District. A water main break causing a water outage or a road closure. Emergencies occur most every day—and DC Water takes steps to prepare and respond.

The Office of Emergency Management is highly skilled and in close relationship with emergency management agencies. The office brings together emergency-trained personnel from many departments to an Incident Management Team for a coordinated response. We participate in the Mayor's Emergency Operations Center and Joint Information Center—locations that combine representatives from District and federal agencies, security and safety agencies, utilities and other public services in one large operations center to manage large-scale event responses.

DC Water also has an in-house 24-hour Emergency Command Center to respond to customers and track personnel in the field. These staff members work with our technical experts in drinking water, infrastructure, management and communication.

Together with these two offices, the Department of Security focuses on the protection of people, facilities, and operational assets of DC Water. Protective measures allow staff to feel safe and focus on their task of providing water and wastewater services. These measures reduce and often eliminate the risk of damaging infrastructure attacks. If there is an incident that requires action by customers, such as a drinking water notification, DC Water will communicate via all channels, including traditional media, social media, alert systems (for those who sign up) and sometimes with door-to-door notification or robocalls by phone.

If you have a water or sewer emergency, please call the Command Center at **202-612-3400**. Please read this important issue of *What's on Tap* and make plans now for your family's safety. Communication, preparation and evacuation strategy tools are available at [ready.gov/publications](https://www.ready.gov/publications).

CEO's Message

Dear Customers:

As we observe Preparedness Month in September, DC Water once again created a special double issue of *What's on Tap*. This guide gives an inside look at ways our organization trains and prepares for emergencies and provides critical information for District residents, employees and visitors on what to do in an emergency.



Some emergencies occur with little to no warning. Others offer up more time. Either way, our goal is to get the information to officials, the media, critical customers and the public quickly and accurately while addressing the operational concerns. DC Water's Office of Emergency Management spearheads coordinated planning and response to ensure our leadership team, front-line staff, agencies, external partners and stakeholders are all on the same page.

Please read this issue—even save it. It may help you avoid a water, sewer or flooding emergency, and will help you respond if one should occur. You will find out how to sign up for the alert system, protect against flooding and back-ups, how to find your home's emergency shutoff valve and how much water to store in case of an emergency.

David L. Gadis
CEO and General Manager
ceosuggestions@dcwater.com



Conserve water in a crisis

Water conservation is key when DC Water needs to preserve its stored water as long as possible. There are various ways for customers to conserve water during an emergency. If you have water service, but are asked to conserve it:

In the bathroom:

- Turn the tap off while shaving or brushing teeth.
- Showers use less water than baths, but take short showers.
- Flush the toilet less often. In most cases, several uses can be made of the toilet for liquid wastes before you need to flush.

In the kitchen:

- Plug up the sink or use a wash basin if washing dishes by hand. Better yet, use paper plates and plastic utensils.
- Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the faucet run until the water is cool.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator overnight rather than using a running tap of hot water.
- Always use a brush, wash cloth, or your hand to dislodge particles of dirt when washing anything rather than relying on the force of the water to do the job.
- Stock food that doesn't require cooking with water.

In the laundry room:

- Hold off on doing laundry until the incident is over.

Outdoor:

- No watering the lawn or landscaping.
- No filling pools, spas or hot tubs.
- No car washing.
- Always use a broom to clean walkways, driveways, decks and porches, rather than hosing off these areas.
- Inspect your outside hoses and spigots to make sure none are leaking or left on.

Protect your property from sewer back-ups and flooding

DC Water reminds customers that the most important step they can take is to check their insurance coverage and consider adding flood or sewer backup protection to it if necessary. The District Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking (DISB) has insurance tips and other useful information on its website at disb.dc.gov or call **202-727-8000**.

A protective device known as a backwater valve is a good line of defense for properties at risk. Also known as a backflow prevention device, this valve is installed on a sewer line that connects a building to the public sewer in the street. The device allows sewage to only exit the home, not flow back in, preventing wastewater from entering the building during strong storms. Some neighborhoods are identified as at-risk for flooding. Residents of those neighborhoods may be eligible for a discount when they install a backwater valve. Visit dcwater.com/faqbfp or call **202-787-2003** for more on this topic.

In addition, to prepare for potential storms and flooding, residents should:

- Report clogged storm drains by calling the 24/7 Command Center at **202-612-3400** or going to dcwater.com/report-problem.
- Check gutters and downspouts to make sure they are clear of debris.
- Keep a battery-powered radio nearby for important news.
- If damage is extensive, listen to the media or visit dcwater.com for information about water and sewer infrastructure.

Visit ready.gov for more information and safety tips.

How much water do I need to store?

It's an emergency! Numerous scenarios can make your tap water undrinkable or unusable—a severe weather event could damage or destroy water and sewer infrastructure. Or a contaminant coupled with a loss of pressure could cause concern of contamination. Residents should stay alert during a disaster and follow the directions of any drinking water advisories.

Residents should store enough water to last at least three days, and if possible, store enough water to last two weeks. How much do you need to store for drinking, for toilet flushing and for other uses?



Drinking Water

For drinking, you should store a minimum of one gallon per person and per pet for each day. Keep your water in air-tight containers, at room temperature, and away from direct sunlight. Replace bottled water when it reaches the

expiration date, or for non-store bought water, after six months. Use this water for drinking, cooking and brushing of teeth.

How much water in total do I need?

1 gallon for drinking + 2 gallons for hygiene/flushing = 3 gallons per person per day; 9 gallons per person for 72 hours; and 42 gallons per person for 2 weeks. If necessary, you can use the water in your water heater for toilet flushing.



Toilet Flushing

When you're in a situation where your water is restricted or shut off, here are some tips to keep your toilet flowing.

- Flush your toilet with a bucket of water. It requires a gallon of water, poured directly into the toilet bowl.
- Start slowly at first, then quickly add the rest of the water into the bowl. The shape of the toilet and the pressure from the water in the bucket pushes everything through the pipes.
- There's no need to use the handle or empty the toilet tank. Save the water in the tank for another day of water restrictions.
- If it's yellow, let it mellow. If it's brown, flush it down.



Hygiene

Remember, you likely won't have water to bathe or to wash dishes or do laundry. So, if you know in advance that the water shut-off or restrictions are coming, you can fill your bathtub, washtub, plastic tubs, large pots

and pans and other containers with water to use for toilet flushing or for a quick sponge bath. Those who live in hurricane-prone areas are familiar with the practice of filling their bathtubs with water when a hurricane is projected for landfall.

Be alerted!

Sign up for emergency notifications

DC Water Alerts

Sign up for DC Water's alert system to be notified of outages and repairs and for news and press releases: dcwater.com/signup



District of Columbia's Government Alerts

AlertDC is the official District of Columbia communications system that sends alerts, notifications, and updates from public safety officials and the emergency manager. Learn about traffic conditions, government closures, public safety incidents and severe weather. To get started today, visit hsema.dc.gov/page/alertdc

Critical Customers: Hospitals and More

Does your property protect the public's health or safety? Or protect the environment? Or service a vulnerable population in the Authority's service area?

If so, your property may be a candidate for notifications through DC Water's mass notification system, Everbridge. Everbridge allows for multimodal messaging from the Authority to critical customers during an incident. To be considered for placement in the critical customer database, please complete the online survey to determine if your facility qualifies: dcwater.com/signup

Stop the gush

Shut the water flow in an emergency



A burst pipe or leaking plumbing can quickly soak your home or office. Find your emergency shut off valve now so you know where it is in an emergency. Tie a ribbon on it, or better yet, paint it with fluorescent paint or apply fluorescent tape so you can find it, even in the dark.

1. Look for the main valve where the water supply enters your house (usually in the basement) or in a concrete box near the street.
2. If the valve is outside your house, lift the cover with a large screwdriver.
3. Use a pipe or crescent wrench to turn the water off.
4. If you must leave the home when the weather is cold, drain all the water from the system, including the hot water heater.

if you
SEE | **SAY**
something | something™

If you see something, say something

We are all familiar with the campaign to motivate bystanders to report suspicious activity. That applies to the District's water system as well. If you see something unusual, for instance someone hooking up to a fire hydrant, or tampering with a fire hydrant, or behaving oddly around a pump station, report it. You can call **911** or **DC Water's 24-hour Command Center** at **202-612-3400**.

DC Water employs a robust Security force to keep buildings secure and who can respond to calls of suspicious behavior.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY
Customer Service Department | 202-354-3600
1385 Canal Street, SE, Washington DC 20003
dcwater.com



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