

# WHAT'S ON TAP



NEWS FOR DC WATER CUSTOMERS • FALL ISSUE



## Leading the Way: Why DC Water is the Most Prepared Utility in the Nation

At DC Water, preparedness is more than planning—it's a core part of how we operate. Through strategic investments, staff training, and national accreditation, we ensure that our teams are ready to respond to any emergency, anytime.

DC Water is accredited by the **Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP)**, a global standard that recognizes excellence in emergency management. This means our Office of Emergency Management (OEM) meets rigorous benchmarks in planning, coordination, and response—and is committed to continuous improvement.

We also invest in hands-on training, giving staff the tools they need to act quickly and safely during critical events. From simulated emergency exercises to remote monitoring system drills, our crews practice what to do when every second counts.

DC Water's reputation for emergency readiness has earned national recognition. When catastrophic flooding impacted Asheville, North Carolina, as a result of the remnants of Hurricane Helene, a team of four was deployed to assist with recovery efforts. The team provided logistical and informational support to the dedicated and exceptional teams in Asheville to get services back to customers.

This is just one example of how our preparedness efforts extend beyond the District, supporting other communities in both readiness and recovery.

Preparedness at DC Water means more than response—it means leadership, accountability, and continuous readiness. That's what it takes to serve our city.

## CEO's Message



Dear Valued Customers,

**Preparedness isn't just about plans. It's about people.**

At DC Water, our mission is to deliver safe, reliable water and wastewater services every single day. But when emergencies happen—whether it's a major storm, a system failure, or a regional event—that mission takes on even greater urgency.

Preparedness is how we protect that mission.

In this issue of *What's On Tap?*, we're highlighting how DC Water plans, trains, and invests to be ready—so that when our customers need us most, we can respond without hesitation. From our nationally recognized emergency management program to infrastructure upgrades that reduce flood risk, preparedness is part of everything we do.

But preparedness doesn't stop with us—it starts with you.

This issue includes practical tips to help you prepare at home or work. You'll learn how to locate your water shut-off valve, how much water to store in case of service interruptions, and what to do during a boil water advisory. We also explain why understanding your water pressure zone is essential during emergencies, and how to sign up for alerts so you're never caught off guard.

Whether you're a resident, a business owner, or a critical service provider, being informed makes a difference—and helps create a more resilient District for all of us.

Thank you for doing your part. We're proud to do ours.

Warm regards,

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

# Do You Know Your Zone? Your Water Pressure Zone



When a water emergency happens—like a water main break, or Boil Water Advisory (BWA)—your location can affect how you are impacted. That is why it is important to know your zone—not just your address.

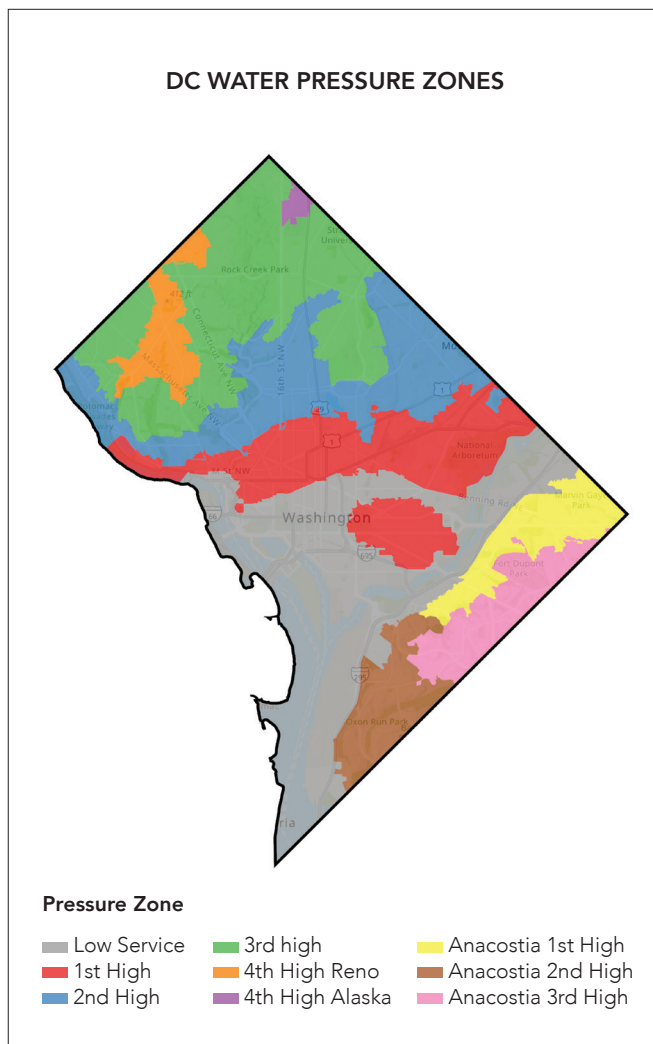
You have a good idea of what neighborhood and Ward you live and work in, but do you know what Water Pressure Zone you live or work in? This information is very useful when there is an emergency.

The District is divided into nine Water Pressure Zones, based on elevation. These zones help determine how much pressure is needed to distribute water and are usually isolated from each other unless connected by operational changes, like opening a valve.

Since each zone is based on elevation, a neighbor across the street could be in an entirely different service area than your home or business. In an emergency, like a BWA, your home or business could be located in the advisory area, but your neighbor may not be.

Understanding your water pressure zone can help you follow the right guidance and get accurate information in a crisis.

To make this easy, we have included a link to the Pressure Zone Map—you can search your address and learn which zone you live or work in. Share this info with your household and neighbors. [dcwater.com/water-distribution-system](https://dcwater.com/water-distribution-system). Preparedness starts with awareness. Knowing your zone is a smart first step.



## What to Do During a Boil Water Advisory



### Updated FAQ and Tips to Keep You Safe

A BWA is issued when there is a chance that your tap water may not be safe to drink. It does not happen often—but when it does, knowing what to do makes a big difference. Recently, in collaboration with DC Health and the DC Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, DC Water updated our Boil Water Advisory FAQs based on recent events and customer questions, so the information is clearer and easier to follow.

The revised FAQ answers common questions like:

- How do I know if I'm affected?
- What does "boil water" really mean?
- Can I shower or do laundry?
- How will I be notified when it's safe again?

We encourage all customers to take a few minutes to read the updated guidance, now available here: [dcwater.com/boilwaterFAQ](https://dcwater.com/boilwaterFAQ). And remember: staying informed before an emergency is just as important as knowing what to do during one.



Boil water advisories are issued out of an abundance of caution, often due to a loss of pressure that could potentially allow contaminants to enter the water system. Knowing how to respond helps keep your household safe and gives our teams time to investigate and resolve the issue. If a BWA is issued, we'll alert you by phone, email, text, social media, and our website—so you're never left guessing. Want to learn more or sign up for alerts? Visit [dcwater.com/Alerts](https://dcwater.com/Alerts). Staying informed helps keep you, your family, and your neighbors safe. Thanks for being prepared!





## Protecting Our Infrastructure for a Flood Free Future

At DC Water, we are investing in projects that protect homes, our infrastructure and the environment from flooding, sewer backups, and extreme weather.

Currently, we are completing a series of floodwalls at the Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant to protect it from 500-year flood events, with added height for wave action during significant weather events. These barriers help prevent sewer overflows, safeguard the Potomac River and protect our critical infrastructure during major storms.

In partnership with the Department of Energy and the Environment, we restored parts of Oxon Run using nature-based solutions. This project improves stream health and helps prevent erosion, fish blockages, and flooding—while protecting nearby sewer lines.



The Clean Rivers Project also plays a key role in flood prevention across the city. By constructing underground storage tunnels and improving sewer capacity, the project will reduce combined sewer overflows by 96 percent in an average rainfall year, helping protect homes, businesses, and the environment from stormwater surges.

To further reduce flood risk, DC Water is upgrading stormwater pumping stations across the city. Improvements at 9th & D, 12th & Maine, and 23rd & Virginia include floodproofing, pump upgrades, and backup power for use during outages. We are also installing smart technology at 16 pump stations for real-time monitoring and faster response.

These projects are part of our long-term commitment to protecting the District's critical infrastructure and reducing the future financial burden to customers – no matter what the weather brings.

## Training to Respond: Empowering Staff Before the Crisis Hits

Behind the scenes at DC Water, our teams take many different preparedness trainings and exercises to ensure we are ready for emergencies—because when we act quickly and effectively, our customers feel the difference.

In total, we conduct about seventy trainings and exercises per year for internal employees and external partners. A new initiative, the Threat, Alert, Preparedness Team Program a joint effort by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), Security, and Safety teams, gives employees tools and skills to ensure their preparedness and safety before, during, and after conducting their work. These trainings support faster and more confident action during emergencies, even when unexpected events occur.



Emergency exercises—such as simulations involving our drinking water monitoring system—help staff prepare for real-life scenarios like power failures or cyberattacks. In addition, OEM coordinates with external partners. One example is the annual critical customer event, where critical users of our water and wastewater systems, such as hospitals, are invited to a workshop setting to enhance water and wastewater preparedness.

Our training and exercise program is not just about preparedness— it's about relationships and readiness. When emergencies happen, DC Water teams and our partners are prepared to respond immediately, helping protect your home, your health, and your peace of mind.



## How Much Water Should You Store in an Emergency?

DC Water encourages all residents to follow FEMA guidance and store enough water for at least 72 hours. A major storm or infrastructure failure could interrupt your water supply or affect water quality.

### Drinking Water

Store one gallon per person (and per pet) per day—enough for drinking, cooking, and brushing your teeth. Use airtight containers, keep them in a cool, dark place, and replace water every six months if it is not store-bought.

### Water for Hygiene

Store extra water for washing, sponge baths, and toilet flushing. If you have warning of a water outage, fill tubs, pots,

and other large containers. You can also use water from your water heater for flushing. Do not drink this water.

### Toilet Flushing

Pour one gallon into the bowl to flush. Start slow, then pour fast to trigger the flush—no need to touch the handle or drain the tank.

### Daily Estimate

Plan for 3 gallons per person per day (1 for drinking, 2 for hygiene). That's 9 gallons per person for 3 days—or 42 gallons for 2 weeks.

Being prepared keeps you and your household safe.

## Know Where Your Water Shut-Off Valve Is

*Quick action can protect your home in an emergency.*

A broken pipe or leak can cause major water damage fast. Find your main shut-off valve now—before you need it.

### Locate it

- Inside: Where the water line enters your home (often in the basement).
- Outside: In a concrete box near the street—use a large screwdriver to lift the cover.

### Make it easy to find

- Mark it with a ribbon, fluorescent tape, or paint for visibility, even in the dark.

### Turn it off

- Use a pipe wrench or crescent wrench to shut off the valve.

### If leaving during winter

- Drain all pipes and your hot water heater to prevent freezing and bursting.



## Stay Informed. Stay Prepared.

*Know what's happening in your neighborhood—before it affects you.*

### Sign up for alerts

- DC Water Alerts – Get outage and emergency notices: [dcwater.com/signup](https://dcwater.com/signup)
- AlertDC – Official DC emergency alerts: [alertdc.dc.gov](https://alertdc.dc.gov). Choose texts, emails, or calls about: boil water advisories, weather warnings, traffic disruptions, or public safety incidents.



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