



# What's on Tap

News for Customers of the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (WASA)

January 2006

## WASA gets a passing grade in citywide lead levels tests

Lead test results from residential tap water samples over the past 12 months show that District drinking water has met federal requirements under the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Lead and Copper Rule (LCR).

For more than a year, lead levels in drinking water have been dropping, a positive trend confirmed by results from the second of two EPA-mandated six-month compliance testing cycles. In the latest round of 103 samples from various

locations around the city, 92 percent were below the EPA's 15 parts per billion action level.

(The "action level" is the point at which EPA requires a system to use corrosion treatment.)

"In the last two consecutive six-month monitoring periods, lead concentrations have been within federal standards," said WASA General Manager Jerry N. Johnson.



"We've successfully met the provisions of the LCR, and will continue in our commitment

to go beyond current regulatory requirements with aggressive monitoring, testing, and lead pipe replacement programs."

WASA purchases treated water wholesale from the US Army Corps of Engineers Washington Aqueduct for distribution to District

customers. The drop in lead levels has been largely attributed to the Aqueduct's addition, in 2004, of orthophosphate to the treatment process to reduce the corrosive nature of water on lead pipes and plumbing fixtures that contain lead.

In conjunction with the change in water chemistry, WASA committed to replace all of the District's publicly-owned lead service lines with copper pipes at a cost of more than \$300 million. To date, 6,647 lines have been replaced.

## Simple steps can maintain high-quality drinking water in your home

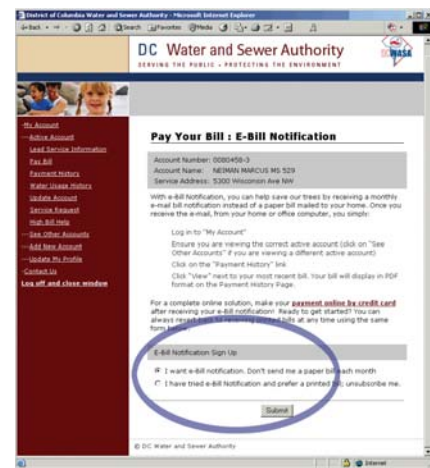
Although citywide sampling indicates that lead levels in District drinking water are now below EPA requirements, WASA continues to recommend the following steps be taken to maintain the highest water quality:



1. If water has been stagnant in the line for more than six hours, flush water lines by running the cold water for 60 seconds prior to using the water from a faucet for drinking or cooking.
2. Periodically remove and clean the strainer/aerator device on your faucet to remove debris.
3. If you use a water filter, replace the cartridge routinely as recommended by the manufacturer.
4. Use cold water for drinking or cooking.
5. Cold water should be heated on the stove for hot beverages or cooking.

## e-Bill is a convenient, paperless way to make payments

Customers can make the entire billing process easy and paperless by taking advantage of WASA's Electronic Funds Transfer program. Sign up online at [www.dcwasa.com](http://www.dcwasa.com), select "My Account" and create a personal profile. Select e-Bill Notification to receive an email instead of a printed bill. Then, select automatic bill payment and pay your bill using a credit card, checking or savings account. Your bill amount will be automatically withdrawn from the account you specified on the due date.



e-Bill Notification Sign Up circled in blue.

By choosing to receive e-Bills and pay your bill automatically, you can make late fees and penalties a thing of the past. And, best of all, you can monitor the entire process online anytime, day or night!

## WASA pledges one-hour emergency service response

Service excellence is one of WASA's highest priorities. To this end, we pledge that, barring a major water emergency in the city, if you have an emergency and dial the Customer Service Emergency Response line, (202) 612-3400, you will:

- speak with a customer service associate within 45 seconds and, if necessary,
- have a WASA response crew at your door within one hour to survey and evaluate the emergency.

We make this pledge because we take serving customers seriously. (Nationally, emergency response times for utilities can average several min-



utes to reach a person and up to several hours to see a response crew.)

Many customers instinctively use a variety

of ways to take care of an emergency repair, including emails to WASA and calls to either the DC Office of Constituent Ser-

vices or the Mayor's Hotline. While each of those options may work, the most direct way to assure the quickest emergency response to a water problem is to dial the WASA Customer Service Emergency Response number, (202) 612-3400.

Among the emergencies that will be investigated are:

- low water pressure
- leaks
- water main breaks
- sewer back-ups
- water quality issues
- illegal fire hydrant use

WASA's emergency response line is available to customers every day, 24 hours a day.

## Use these ten easy tips to help you save water

1. Collect the water you use for rinsing produce and reuse it to water houseplants.
2. We're more likely to notice leaky faucets indoors, but don't forget to check the outdoor faucets, pipes, and hoses for leaks.
3. When you shop for a new appliance, consider one offering cycle and load size adjustments. They are more water and energy efficient than older appliances.
4. Time your shower to keep it under 5 min-

- utes. You'll save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
5. Install low-volume toilets.
6. Put food coloring in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the toilet bowl, you have a leak. It's easy to fix, and you can save more than 600 gallons a month.
7. Designate one glass for your drinking water each day. This will cut down on the number



- of times you run your dishwasher.
8. Don't use running water to thaw food.
9. Make sure you know where the master water shut-off valve is located. This could save gallons of

- water and damage to your home if a pipe were to burst.
10. Turn off the water while you brush your teeth and save 4 gallons a minute. That's 200 gallons a week for a family of four. (Source: Water—Use it Wisely, www.wateruseitwisely.com)

*For more information, visit WASA's web site at [www.dcwasa.com](http://www.dcwasa.com).*

*Para leer este folleto en Español, por favor visite nuestra página web [www.dcwasa.com](http://www.dcwasa.com).*

**Report Emergencies 24 Hours a day!**

*To report improper use of hydrants, clogged catch basins, water main leaks, or suspected sewer backups, call (202) 612-3400.*

*To reach WASA's Lead Services Hotline, call (202) 787-2732.*