

WHAT'S ON



TAP?

NEWS FOR DC WATER CUSTOMERS | VOL. 16 ISSUE 4



General Manager's message:



In March we reported some fantastic news—the most recent test results show a significant decline in lead levels in the District's drinking water. In fact, the levels have continued to decline since 2004 when the water treatment process was changed, and are now historically low.

The Authority has worked hard to reduce lead in the distribution system and help customers to eliminate lead sources. Since 2003, we have replaced more than 19,000 lead service pipes – that translates into nearly 115 miles of pipes connecting the water mains to household plumbing. The Drinking Water Division has also distributed countless lead test kits to customers for free, following up with plumbing inspections and more extensive testing when warranted.

Certainly our work is not done, and we remind customers that lead sources are different in each property. DC Water recommends that each property owner identify and remove sources of lead from plumbing materials. We take our mission to provide safe, clean drinking water very seriously and we will not compromise public health. If you have any questions about your drinking water, or would like a free lead test kit, please contact the Drinking Water Division at (202) 612-3440.

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Dial before you dig

Each time you begin an outdoor project that involves digging, you must call "Miss Utility" first. Call (800) 257-7777 to get your underground utility lines marked to avoid damage. Accidentally hitting utility lines is extremely dangerous and can cause a disruption in service, harm to the environment or life-threatening personal injury. "Miss Utility," a one-call notification center, will locate and mark all of your lines, including water, sewer, gas, electric and cable. Homeowners or professional excavators are required by law to call "Miss Utility" at least two working days (48 hours) before digging in the District. You can check the status of your request at missutility.net.



Water disinfection returns to chloramines



Beginning May 4, the disinfectant used in the District's drinking water will return to chloramines. The Washington Aqueduct is the organization responsible for treating drinking

water in the District. The Aqueduct uses chloramines (chlorine plus ammonia) as a disinfectant for most of the year, because it prevents the growth of harmful microorganisms and provides long-lasting protection as water travels through the pipes to your tap. From March 23 to May 4, 2015, the disinfectant used for drinking water treatment was temporarily switched to chlorine.

Customers who take special precautions to remove chlorine from tap water, such as dialysis centers, medical facilities and aquatic pet owners, should continue to take the appropriate precautions to remove chloramines. The temporary switch to chlorine disinfection is an annual program that deep cleans the pipe system and helps to maintain water quality throughout the year. DC Water continuously monitors disinfectant concentrations to ensure that water meets safe target levels. For more information, contact the Drinking Water Division at (202) 612-3440.

Cool off with DC Water this summer

DC Water offers water services that are popular for outdoor events during warm weather. These services are typically reserved for community events with 100 or more participants. Our event amenities include a 10' x 10' misting tent, mobile water coolers and mascots. We also offer a Mobile Water Conservation Unit to demonstrate household conservation techniques that help customers save money on their water bill. If you are interested in any of these options, please submit an online event request form (requests are reviewed April-September) at dcwater.com/about/tent_request_form.cfm or call (202) 787-2200 for more information.



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Hydrants are for fighting fires

Fire hydrants are an important part of the District's fire protection. They are specifically made for use by firefighters to save property, homes and lives.



When the summer heats up, some people are tempted to open a hydrant, but this can be dangerous. For one, the water comes out with great force—it can knock a person over or cause injury, especially to children. Additionally, a hydrant can be damaged when opened without the proper tools.

Opening a hydrant releases more than 1,800 gallons of water per minute, lowering water pressure in the area, which can also hinder firefighting. Finally, all that water on the streets can wreak havoc with traffic and put adults and children playing in the water in harm's way.

There are plenty of ways to stay cool. Go to an air conditioned library, theater, museum or mall. Take a dip in the pool, or request DC Water's services for your large gathering. Save yourself from harm and your neighbors from danger. Make this summer a safe one!

Keep the meter clear

The DC Water Customer Service Department relies on meter readings to give you a bill based on your actual water use. In most cases, DC Water can read your meter twice a day electronically, and monitor your water usage to help identify possible water leaks using our High Usage Notification Alerts (HUNA) system. To ensure you are billed for only the amount of water you use, and to be able to receive HUNA alerts, it is important that your meter cover remains clear. Garbage cans, parked cars, trees, plants and shrubs are among some of the common barriers that can interfere with electronic meter readings. When a manual meter reading is required, DC Water technicians need easy access to



obtain accurate readings. If your meter is blocked, you will receive an estimated bill based on past usage. Avoid estimated readings by providing clear access to your meter. If you need to schedule an appointment for DC Water to access your property, please contact the Meter Operations Department at (202) 612-3500.

SPOTLIGHT ON:



AMERICAN FORESTS

All life on the planet needs water to survive — trees included — and yet, this is not a one-way relationship. Since its founding in 1875, American Forests has stressed the importance of riparian forests as solutions to improving water quality and the health of aquatic ecosystems.

Forests are natural sponges, absorbing water and with it, harmful pollutants such as heavy metals or phosphorous that could otherwise enter waterways, posing health risks to surrounding communities. Because of this, forests can help pre-treat drinking water before it reaches the actual treatment facility. Forests are also able to retain excess water — better known as run-off — in extreme storm events, helping prevent flooding and river pollution in urban areas and benefiting aquatic environments, which are some of the most fragile in the world. Small changes in oxygen levels, pH, temperature or nutrients can throw off the balance of the entire ecosystem. Riparian forests help maintain this healthy balance by cooling the water, providing habitat and retaining soils and pollutants that would otherwise continue into larger bodies of water.

For 25 years, American Forests has helped many organizations reforest riparian environments through its Global ReLeaf program. In 2015 alone, Global ReLeaf is working with partners from Washington State to Haiti to establish and restore riparian areas in 10 water-focused projects. Many of them are located in watersheds that provide drinking water to millions of people.

For more information, please visit americanforests.org



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