# Why do I need a pressure reducing valve?

DC Water has started constructing the St. Elizabeths Water Storage Tower and Large Diameter Transmission Main project on St. Elizabeths East Campus. The project is currently scheduled for completion in spring 2018. The operation of the water storage tower will result in higher water pressure in areas of Ward 8. This project is part of a long-term solution to address community concerns regarding low water pressure in your area. DC Water has identified more than 1,600 homes that will experience water pressure greater than 80 pounds per square inch (psi). Per the District of Columbia Plumbing Code, these homes will require installation of a pressure reducing valve (PRV) on the plumbing to substantially reduce the risk of property damage, due to the pressure increase.

# What is the project’s direct phone number?

(202) 787-4065 (weekdays, from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)

# What is the project’s email address?

[pzip2ndhigh@dcwater.com](mailto:pzip2ndhigh@dcwater.com)

# What is the project’s website address?

[www.dcwater.com/pzip2ndhigh](http://www.dcwater.com/pzip2ndhigh)

# What is the project’s mailing address?

District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority

Anacostia 2nd High Residential Pressure Reducing Valve Installation Project

DETS-Construction CMF 2nd Floor

5000 Overlook Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20032

# What is the area affected by this higher pressure?

The areas affected are Ward 8 area homes and in the vicinity of BridgePoint Hospital National Harbor (formerly Hadley Hospital), United Medical Center (formerly Greater Southeast Hospital), St. Elizabeths Hospital, and Congress Heights.

# Will I be charged for the PRV installation?

No, DC Water will pay for the PRV and will install it for free. The homeowner will be responsible for signing and returning the DC Water Private Property Pressure Reducing Valve Agreement to allow the installation, and providing access to the property for installation.

# Am I responsible for maintaining the PRV? What do I need to do to ensure it is working properly in, say, a year from now, and then longer-term?

The homeowner is responsible for maintaining the PRV, similar to your home’s shut-off valves and faucets. At the time of installation, the contractor will provide the manufacturer’s instructions and warranty. Maintenance information for your new PRV will be included in that information. The PRV is typically very low maintenance.

# Does the PRV come with a manufacturer’s warranty?

Yes. Upon completion of the PRV installation, the contractor will provide the homeowner with manufacturer’s operations, maintenance, and warranty information.

For a period of three years from the completion of the pressure increase, DC Water will replace or repair any malfunctioning PRVs and/or any plumbing installed by DC Water’s contractor.

# What problems can occur to my home’s internal plumbing from increased water pressure?

Increased water pressure can cause problems such as:

* Noisy pipes or water hammer, especially when opening or closing faucets. Prolonged water hammer can compromise internal pipes and cause them to break.
* Damaged water heater.
* Leaking pipes and faucets.
* Leaks in other parts of indoor plumbing.

# When do I need to return my Agreement?

The deadline to return your Agreement is March 1, 2018.

# Can I use a private plumber to do this work?

Yes. DC Water recommends that customers choosing not to participate in the free PRV installation project contact a private plumber to have one installed prior to completion of the St. Elizabeths Water Storage Tower and water mains. The construction of the water tower is currently scheduled to be completed by spring 2018. The District of Columbia Plumbing Code requires that the plumber be licensed in the District to perform the work.

# Walk me through the process of a typical installation.

A team of two or three project team members will come to your home on the scheduled appointment date and time. The team will include a DC Water inspector, the contractor (plumber), and, at times, an inspector from the DC Department of Regulatory and Consumer Affairs. The plumber will locate and assess the area of installation to make certain the work can be performed within the 2-hour scheduled time. Water service will be shut off, and the PRV will be installed at the point where the existing water service line enters your home. If no water shut-off valve is located inside your home, DC Water will turn off the water using a curb-stop located outside your home and install a new internal shut-off valve in addition to the PRV. This work will all be done at no cost to the homeowner. After the installation is complete, the system will be flushed by the contractor. You must also sign the contractor’s installation form, which will indicate the work has been explained and completed, and that a copy of the warranty has been provided to you.

# I’m not sure what area to clear; how can I tell where the PRV should be installed?

The shut-off valve is typically located in the basement, where the water service line enters the home. However, it could be located elsewhere in your home. For more information, you can type into your web browser: *Getting to know your main water shut-off valve*; this is a YouTube informational video published by DC Water. The video may also be located here: [*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awGlvXZy8EA.*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awGlvXZy8EA)

# What do I do if there is a plumbing failure?

You should know where your main shut-off valve is located and how to shut off the water. Shut off the main water valve to prevent flooding. Contact a DC-licensed plumber immediately. Ensure all members of the household know how to operate the shut-off valve.

# Can the PRV be a fixture that is attached to the water meter?

No, the PRV should be installed inside the home, where the water service line enters the building, near the shut-off valve. The PRV needs to be readily accessible for maintenance.

# Why won’t DC Water repair drywall, if their contractor removed the drywall?

DC Water’s contractor must be able to gain access to the area of the plumbing needed to install the PRV. It may be necessary to remove drywall to access this area. According to the District of Columbia Plumbing Code, it is the property owner’s responsibility to ensure immediate access to the building’s water shut-off valve and surrounding area. This includes a requirement that the owner not cover the valve with a wall, floor/ceiling surface, or owner belongings.

DC Water will perform limited drywall restoration (drywall and primer) to the extent removed to complete the PRV installation.

# Who will contact me regarding this work?

After you return your signed Agreement, DC Water’s contractor will contact you directly to schedule your installation appointment.

# I work during the day. Are there evening or weekend appointments available?

Weekday appointments for PRV installations can be made between 7:00 AM and 4:00 PM, with all work completed by 7:00 PM. Saturday appointments for PRV installations can be made between 8:30 AM and 1:00 PM, with all work completed by 5:00 PM.

# How long will the installation take?

Typically, PRV installations are completed within two hours. If more time is needed due to atypical plumbing or an area that is cluttered or not easily accessible, a second visit may need to be scheduled.

# Why would more than two hours be needed for the installation?

A second appointment may be needed if there is atypical plumbing, the work area is cluttered, or there are appliances obstructing the installation site.

# Will my water service be shut off during the PRV installation?

Yes, the water service must be shut off during the installation. The contractor will shut off the water using the shut-off valve inside your home shortly after the installation team arrives for the scheduled appointment.

# What if I don’t have a water shut-off valve inside my home?

If no water shut-off valve is located inside your home, DC Water will turn off the water using a curb- stop located outside your home and install a new internal shut-off valve in addition to the PRV.

This work will all be done at no cost to the homeowner.

# Do I need to be present for this work to be done?

Yes, the property owner or his or her representative must grant access and be present for the duration of the appointment. The representative can be the tenant if the property is rented. The representative must be an adult.

# Will PRV installation impact water quality?

The installation of the PRV and the upcoming pressure increase can temporarily affect your water quality. You may experience:

* Potential lead release from lead sources, including lead service pipes, solder, brass faucets, valves or fittings and galvanized iron pipes.
* Discolored water from disturbing old water mains and household pipes.

At the time of the PRV installation, DC Water will provide a free water filter pitcher for your use.

# Will there be an increase in my water bill?

It is possible that the increase in pressure will cause an increase in water consumption and your bill. Therefore, water conservation is suggested. We do have tips for conserving water on our website at: [*www.dcwater.com/water-conservation*.](http://www.dcwater.com/water-conservation)

# Will this project require additional insurance?

No.

# Will the pressure increase affect galvanized pipes?

The increase in water pressure can potentially cause problems in homes which have galvanized pipes. Galvanized pipes are made of iron and are a dull, silver-gray color. Over many years, the iron can corrode, making the pipe brittle. These pipes can experience new leaks under the increased pressure. The corroded iron inside the pipe can easily break off and release iron and other metals in water, causing discolored water. This plumbing material was installed in many homes built before the 1960s. Owners who have galvanized pipes should contact a local plumber. Replacement of galvanized pipes is outside the scope of DC Water’s PRV offer and will be at the owner’s expense.

# What is the completion date of this project?

Spring 2018.

# How will I be able to identify the contractors coming to install the PRV?

All DC Water employees have badges with photo identification. The contractor will display a badge issued by DC Water. Three people will come to your home: a DC Water inspector, DCRA inspector, and the contractor. All representatives will have visible identification.

# What happens if the computer that runs the pump goes off line?

The pumping station has built-in safeguards to avoid over-pressurizing the system. The pumping station is remotely monitored by operators who are alerted to system alarms and they have the ability and resources to correct issues, either remotely or by sending operators to the site.

# If pressure increases, will it push out existing lead in pipes into your water?

If you have a lead service pipe or household lead sources, the change in pressure may increase lead release in water. Lead levels can potentially remain elevated until pipes adjust to the change in water pressure. Galvanized pipes are also a significant source of lead in households that have, or once had, a lead service pipe. Residents should remove and clean aerators and flush the taps with cold water after the pressure increase is complete. (DC Water will provide updates closer to the date).

DC Water will provide a water filter and six-month supply of replacement cartridges to eligible homes that have, or once had, a lead service pipe prior to increasing pressures in the area.

DC Water will provide additional information on water quality prior to increasing pressures in the area. Additionally, DC Water offers free lead testing to help residents identify potential lead sources. To request a free lead test kit, contact Customer Service at (202) 354-3600 or

email [*leadtest@dcwater.com*.](mailto:leadtest@dcwater.com)

# The valve should be placed on the outside of the home and not inside of the home, to put the burden on DC Water and not the homeowner in the event that something goes wrong.

The [Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs](http://dcra.dc.gov/) (DCRA) recommends that the PRV be installed indoors. In the District of Columbia, all the existing PRVs are located inside on the internal plumbing after the shut-off valve, which best matches the intent of the DC Plumbing Code.

Additionally, PRVs are not typically permitted to be installed inside the meter pit in the District since the device may not function as intended, due to proximity to the backflow preventer.

# The plumber’s code was changed without public input or knowledge to benefit DC Water.

DCRA administers the DC Plumbing Code. It was developed by DCRA Board members, architects, engineers, contractors, property managers, real estate developers, and government regulators over a two-year period.

The District has adopted the International Plumbing Code (IPC). The IPC is in use or adopted in 35 states, the District of Columbia, NYC, Guam, and Puerto Rico. DC Water does not have the authority to determine, write, or publish the plumbing code. The provisions for PRV requirement have not changed since DC Water started planning for this project in 2010.

The link at: <https://codes.iccsafe.org/public/document/details/toc/917> provides the entire District of Columbia Plumbing Code publication.

# Will installation of the valve affect homeowners insurance?

No.

# What are the hazards of the valve?

The valve is self-contained and does not have exposed operating parts. The PRV provides protection to household plumbing by limiting pressures to a maximum of 80 psi so that pressures are within the District of Columbia Plumbing Code.

# How will the water tower impact multi-unit buildings?

Under DC Water’s current policy, the free PRV installation program initiated under the Anacostia 2nd High Residential Pressure Reducing Valve Installation project does not cover multi-family buildings.

# Will the May 1 deadline for participation in the program be extended?

Yes, DC Water will extend the deadline to March 1, 2018 to increase participation. This is your last opportunity to participate in DC Water’s free PRV installation project. Agreements must be submitted to DC Water by March 1, 2018.

# Who schedules the installation appointments, DC Water or the contractor?

Either the contractor or DC Water will contact you to schedule an installation appointment that works best with your schedule.