



BEACON HILL
WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT
1121 West Side Highway
Kelso, WA 98626
(360) 636-3860
(360) 575-9375 FAX
www.bhwsd.org

Tips to Prevent Winter Plumbing Problems

When temperatures drop plumbing problems are very common. There are many things that homeowners can do to prevent these problems. Here are some tips to keep homeowners and their families warm as winter temperatures take over.

- Avoid frozen pipes. Wrap exposed pipes with insulation. Watch your water pressure because the first sign of a frozen pipe is restricted water flow.
- On the coldest nights, let cold water trickle from your faucets. This helps prevent freezing as moving water does not freeze.
- Garden hoses can cause major damage if not disconnected. During freezing weather, if a garden hose is left connected, ice will form and pressure will build up in the water lines inside your home. Once this occurs, a water line leak or break is common. Disconnect garden hoses and drain outdoor pipes to prevent damage during the winter.
- After disconnecting hoses, you should install an exterior, insulated faucet jacket. This will protect your outdoor faucets, as well as the connecting lines running into the home, from freezing temperatures.
- Circulating warm air helps keep pipes in the walls from freezing. Keep your house temperature above 55 degrees to prevent pipes from freezing and open cabinet doors under sinks and faucets and near exterior walls to help circulate warm air and keep pipes warmer.
- Close crawl space vents and garage doors, especially if your water heater is in the garage.
- Check to be sure that snow is not restricting your water drainage. Watch the area around your sump pump discharge line used to avoid flooding indoors, as this line drains from a basement to an outside area. If the drainage area is blocked by snow or flowing into a puddle, freezing could occur as well as water backing-up into the house.



BEACON HILL
WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

Water/Sewer

CONNECTION

Things to Look For

Winter 2015-16

BHWSD BILLING PROGRAMS

1. Auto-Pay

Did you know that you could have your payment electronically debited from a Visa, MasterCard, Discover or a checking or savings account? To sign up with a credit/debit card, go to www.bhwsd.org to register. To sign up with a checking or savings account, contact our office to request an authorization form.

2. Senior Discount

If you are a homeowner receiving a discount on your property taxes through Cowlitz County, you will qualify for a 15% discount on your water base rate and 15% on sewer (if applicable). Contact our office to request the form.

3. Long Vacancy

If you will be gone for 90 days or more, it may make sense to have your water meter locked and pay \$5.00 per month for water and \$5.00 per month for sewer (if applicable). There is a \$30.00 water reconnection fee when you return. Contact our office for more details or to request a vacancy form.

Commissioner Meetings

Commissioner meetings are held the third Wednesday of each month and the public is always welcome to voice comments or concerns.

Meetings are held at 5:15 pm in the upstairs meeting room, 1121 West Side Highway, Kelso, Washington

For more information, or accessibility concerns please contact the office at 636-3860.

What's New?

We would like to welcome incoming Commissioner Keath Huff to the Beacon Hill Water and Sewer District Board of Commissioners. Keath will be replacing Dean Takko who has served as a BHWSD Commissioner for 31 years! Dean has given loyal and committed service in his years as a District Commissioner and has been influential in passing legislation that benefits Water and Sewer Districts and their customers. Thank you Dean! We wish you all the best! And to all of our customers, Have a Happy New Year!

New Software

Over the last few months, we have been transitioning to and training on a new billing and accounting software. The old software program was going to lose technical support and we are working toward meeting new accounting requirements. Ultimately, it will give us better functionality and allow us to better serve our customers. As with any software change, there are bugs to work out as we transition to the new program. We are doing our best to minimize problems to our customers. Please be patient with us if you experience any problems related to this effort.

We are also working on changing payment service vendors. We currently use multiple vendors to process customer payments in house, online and over the phone. It has become necessary to transition to a single vendor in order to offer a more secure, convenient and user-friendly experience. You will still have all the same payment options as before but with added features such as wireless phone apps and E-Bill. Keep your eyes open for more information coming soon.

CONTACT US:

If you have any questions about your water or sewer service, please feel free to contact us. We are here to serve you. BHWSD prides itself on being local government that "works WITHOUT taxes".

BHWSD Office

1121 West Side Highway
Kelso, WA 98626
(360) 636-3860
(360) 575-9375 Fax
www.bhwsd.org
Info@bhwsd.org

District Manager

Dell Hillger
dhillger@bhwsd.org

Billing Questions

Vicki Kruse
vkruise@bhwsd.org

DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS: MONTE RODEN • BONNIE DECIUS • KEATH HUFF

Utility Rates

In 2014, BHWSD performed a rate study to evaluate the operations and maintenance costs and planned capital improvements for water and sewer to determine what our water and sewer rates should be. Both the water and sewer systems have infrastructure that is up to 70 years old. Much of the water system pump stations and piping are either reaching or exceeding their useful life. Also, system growth in certain areas has exceeded the system capacity and will require upgrades to match the demand. As a result, we need to engage in aggressive capital improvements in order to keep the system running at full functionality. Over the last few years we have replaced water and sewer pump stations, replaced water mains, added an intertie with Longview for greater source reliability, looped some dead end mains, added pressure reducing stations, and added a new SCADA (telemetry) system to have greater control and better information of operations. However, many more projects are necessary to keep the water safe and reliably flowing to our customers.

In the past, we have been able to acquire funding with low interest Public Works Trust Fund loans, which helps to keep rates down. Unfortunately, the state legislature recently used the funds earmarked for this program in order to fund K-12 education as mandated by the state Supreme Court's *McCleary* decision. Grants and low interest loans for rehab and replacement of infrastructure have become harder to find or more competitive as many agencies are vying for these dollars. We had acquired a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loan, which is low interest federal dollars, but it comes with much red tape and requires more staff management. Our goal is to maintain and upgrade the water and sewer systems while keeping the rates reasonable. BHWSD rates are generally competitive or even lower than neighboring utilities for outside city limits.

The rate study took all of these factors into account, and it was determined that we won't need to raise the sewer rates through 2019. However, the many water system capital improvement needs will require an approximate 5% rate increase for 2016 and 2017, and 4% for 2018 and 2019. So, for example, if the water portion of your bill is currently \$39.85 per month for an average five hundred cubic feet of use (\$28.60 base & \$2.25/ccf x 5ccf), then it will be \$41.75 (\$30.00 base & \$2.35/ccf x 5ccf) in 2016. This example results in an average increase of \$1.90 per month or \$22.80 for the whole year. Of course, your water bill will be more or less depending on how much water you use. Annually, we reevaluate the system needs and give careful consideration to any rate increases. The District strives to maintain and improve our infrastructure while minimizing the financial impact to our customers.

2015 Projects

Various Projects completed in 2015:

- * SCADA: New cellular based telemetry controls replaced old PUD telemetry on the water systems and provides data on system functions not previously accessible by staff.
- * Monticello Dr. and Sunset Dr. improvements: Intertied dead end mains with 6" ductile iron mains and new pressure reducing valves. Provides better reliability of service to customers and less customers shut off during repairs.
- * Crestline Place Water Main Replacement: 900 feet of failing asbestos cement and cast iron water main replaced with 4" & 6" C900 PVC water main. Eliminates frequent water main breaks and outages.
- * The Grandview Pump Station has been replaced with a new building, pumps, and controls to provide greater reliability and longevity in pumping water to the upper zones of our system.
- * West Side Hwy Emergency Water Main Replacement: 400 feet of failing 1-1/4" galvanized pipe replaced with 8" ductile iron main.
- * BHWSD Facility Fencing - and land acquisition: After acquiring the PUD water system, we needed more space for additional staff, equipment and materials. By acquiring adjacent land, we were able to expand the existing facility's useable space at a much more reasonable cost than relocating to new property. We are constructing a new fence to encompass the new boundary and provide a more useable yard. We hope to add a new office in the future that is better suited for accessibility and serving our customers.



West Side Hwy Emergency Water Main Replacement



Crestline Place Water Main



Grandview Pump Station

Future Projects

Various Projects for 2016/17:

- * Continue various water main replacements, especially those constructed of galvanized iron pipe.
- * Replace pressure reducing valves at various locations.
- * Design and prepare for Hillside Pump Station replacement.
- * Reservoir cleaning, repairs, and circulation improvements.
- * Sewer main inspection and replacement.

