

Water Meter Access

While the water meter is typically within the road right of way, many meters are difficult to access due to the customer's bushes or trees overgrowing into the right of way or even fences blocking access. Access needs to be provided to the District for water meter reading and meter maintenance. Any vegetation that impedes access to the meter should be trimmed back; otherwise District crews may need to remove it, but you may not like their trimming job as much as doing it yourself. If you aren't sure how much you need to trim for District access, please call our office and one of our field crew can meet with you on site.

Hydrant Flushing

In 2014, we will be flushing hydrants in March, April, and May, then later in September, October, and November in order to exercise water valves and clear the lines of sediment. The day before we start flushing in an area, our crews will place A-frame "sandwich board" signs on the roads leading to the area that they will be flushing. You may notice some water discoloration after the flushing, but running your water for a few minutes should clear it up.



Water/Sewer CONNECTION

Winter 2013-14

Changes at the District

Greetings! I would like to take a few moments and introduce myself. My name is Dell Hillger, and I am the new General Manager for Beacon Hill Water and Sewer District. I am honored to have the opportunity to serve this District. Beacon Hill has been well managed by the elected Board of Commissioners and the previous General Managers. While many agencies are struggling with being able to make infrastructure improvements and investing in the future of their customers, Beacon Hill has a track record of good planning and funding for providing quality service. I hope to continue this work and also look for new ways to improve our service to the customer. In this newsletter you will find information on some of the changes we are making, water quality updates, and guidance on customer responsibilities.

Also, we would like to welcome incoming Commissioner Bonnie Decius to the District Board of Commissioners. Bonnie will be replacing Ted Branch who has served as a Commissioner since 1997. Ted has given loyal and committed service in his years as a District Commissioner. Thank you Ted! We wish you all the best! And to all our customers, Have a Happy New Year!

BHWSO BILLING PROGRAMS

1. Auto-Pay

Would you prefer a smaller payment each month rather than the two month bills you currently receive? Contact us about auto-pay. No, checks, no stamps—we automatically withdraw your payment from your checking or savings account each month.

2. Senior Discount

Are you a senior who qualifies for reduced property taxes? You may qualify for a discount on your sewer bill. Contact our office for more information.

3. Long Term Vacancy

If you will be gone for a month or more, it may make sense to have your water meter locked and pay only \$5 per month each for water and sewer. This not only protects you against water damage to your property and water theft, it also saves you money. Call us for more information.

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 4:00 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.



BEACON HILL
WATER AND SEWER DISTRICT

1121 West Side Highway
Kelso, WA 98626

(360) 636-3860

(360) 575-9375 FAX

www.bhwsd.org

Transition to Monthly Billing

For those customers on bi-monthly billing, we will be transitioning to monthly billing statements. Commercial accounts and customers that use Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) payments are already on a monthly billing cycle. This change will simplify your billing, make it less confusing, and will make budgeting for payments more consistent. This process will take a few months as some accounts are on alternating billing cycles. If you have any questions during this process, please feel free to contact our office for assistance.

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. BHWSO prides itself on being local government that "works WITHOUT taxes".

BHWSO Office

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District Manager

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Billing Questions

Vicki Kruse
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DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS: MONTE RODEN • DEAN TAKKO • BONNIE DECIUS

Payment Drop Box

For customers that drop off their payments to our office, we will be installing a drive-up payment drop box near the Beacon Hill office entrance. This will save you time from having to wait in line during daytime hours and provides a safe and convenient option after hours since you won't have to get out of your car. We hope to have it installed by March, 2014.

Utility Rates

Starting January 1, 2014 rates will be adjusted 2.2% for inflation and the increased cost of doing business. However, over the next few months we will be looking at evaluating all the rates to see if other adjustments or increases are needed to keep up with capital improvements and maintenance. We will make every effort to minimize rate increases.

How Do I Control My Bills?

In this Challenging Economy

While the new monthly billing will help keep our customers from falling behind, we want to make sure everyone is taking advantage of the programs we already have in place.

If you sign up for our EFT program we will automatically draw your payment from your checking or savings account. The withdrawal is made monthly for the amount due at the first months read.

You can also save yourself a trip or a stamp by making your payment online. You can make payments at anytime online so you could also make them monthly.

We offer a small discount to our low income senior citizens. And we have special rates if you will be out of town for more than 30 days. Call the office to see if you qualify.

Finally, watch your bills this Fall for notice of our next open sign up period for level billing. If you have higher summer water use, this will allow you to pay a level amount year round.

Shut off valves

If you haven't already, it is a good idea to install your own whole house shut-off valve on your water line after the meter. If you end up with a broken pipe, you will be glad you did.

If you don't have a valve, remember it's very important to call us to turn off your water at the meter. The meters are District property and should only be shut off by District personnel. In an emergency we will come out day or night at no charge. Customers who try to "do it themselves" may break the meter valve which would result in high costs for replacement and Tampering Fees.



did you know...



Approximately 400 billion gallons of water are used in the United States each day.



The average faucet flows at a rate of 2 gallons per minute. One drip per second will waste 3000 gallons per year.



A running toilet can waste up to 200 gallons per day, and running can be intermittent as parts wear out.

Water Quality

As many of you are aware, we receive our water from the City of Longview, and the City switched in early 2013 from treating Cowlitz River water to a well system for water source supply. The City has experienced some challenges with the water quality over the past year, primarily discoloration and solids in certain parts of Longview and water hardness throughout the system.

The City has been testing the water and researching methods to address the concerns. You can check out the following link to the City website which addresses Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) about the water and includes other links to water quality updates and public meeting presentations: <http://mylongview.com/index.aspx?page=568> In general, the testing is showing that the water appears to be stabilizing, although it is still expected to take some time to reach equilibrium.

Please note that in spite of the changes you have seen in your water, the water is still safe to drink according to the Safe Drinking Water Act. We are not experiencing on the same level some of the more extreme issues that the City has experienced, such as the discolored water from iron, manganese, and pipe scale releases. We have however seen some increase in hardness.

Although sometimes an annoyance, the hardness is considered an aesthetic issue by the Washington State Department of Health and the EPA. According to the levels at which we have tested, the hardness is moderate in the range of 65-99 mg/L. Most agencies that treat for hardness do so to bring it down from 200 mg/L or higher to about 100 mg/L. These type of treatment systems can be very expensive which would require a significant increase in rates to pay for it. However, this is a cost we would like to avoid, and we are working with the City in trying to find the best way to address these concerns. As this work will take some time, we appreciate your patience during this process.

Water Loss Per Quarter @ 60 PSI Water Pressure			
Diameter of Stream	Gallons	Cubic Feet	Cubic Meters
● --- 1/4"	1,181,500	158,000	4,475
● --- 3/16"	666,000	89,031	2,521
● --- 1/8"	296,000	39,400	1,115
● --- 1/16"	74,000	9,850	280

↑ A continuous leak from a hole this size would, over a three month period, waste water in the amounts shown above.

This chart shows how much water is lost through various sized leaks. That running faucet or toilet can result in very high water bills. It also shows how important it is to get that broken pipe repaired right away. If you experience a leak due to broken pipes, contact us to see if you qualify for an adjustment.