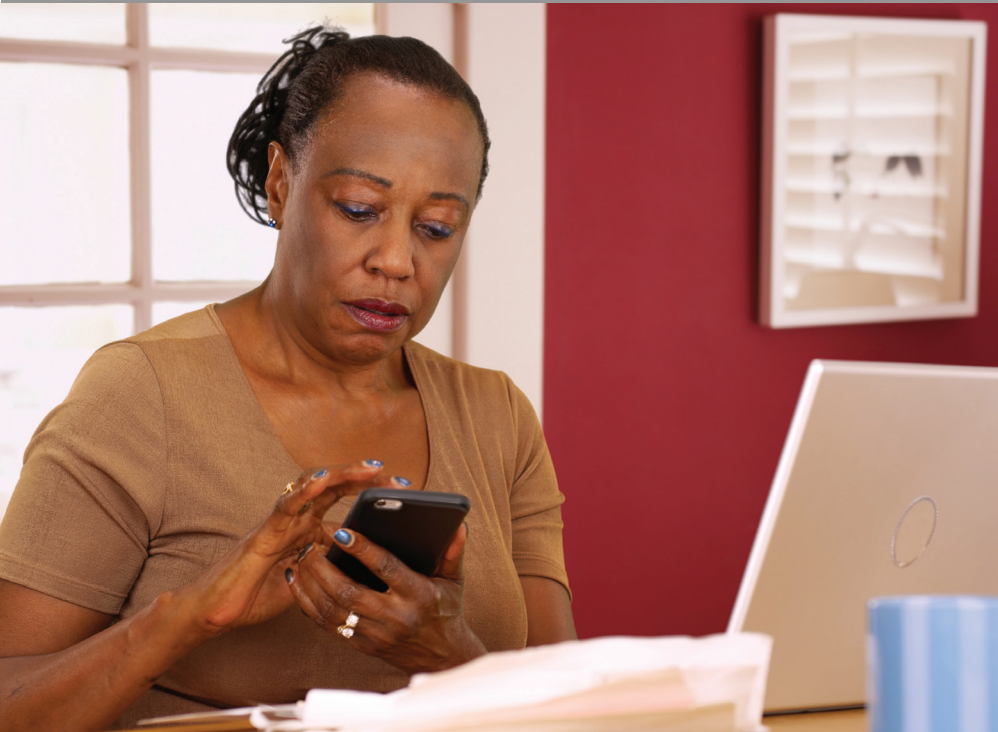


# WHAT'S ON TAP



NEWS FOR DC WATER CUSTOMERS • VOLUME 19 ISSUE 8



## GM's Message

Dear Customers:



This year Preparedness Month comes on the heels of our recent precautionary boil water advisory for parts of Northeast and Northwest DC in mid-July. This was the first such water emergency for DC Water in more than three years and the first during my tenure.

Our Operations staff employed modeling and data analysis to identify the impact area and our Incident Management Team went into action collecting water samples, coordinating with multiple partner response agencies, planning critical meetings and contingencies, and communicating with the public.

We reached out in many ways to advise those in the affected area to boil their water. While we experienced unprecedented call volumes and website traffic which led to some overload, we also communicated via broadcast news, social media, and coordination with elected officials and District agencies, including the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, among other channels.

During the emergency, we expanded our website server capabilities and we are planning for more capacity to handle even larger volumes. We are exploring a phone system mechanism to provide a recorded message during times of high call volumes. We are also researching better solutions for quicker outgoing calls and ways to reach larger numbers.

Public health is our most critical mission and we want the public to know as quickly as possible if there are any precautions or concerns. Please read this special double issue to find out how you can sign up for news and alerts and to learn steps you can take in preparing for and responding to a water or sewer emergency.

**David L. Gadis**  
CEO and General Manager  
gmsuggestions@dcwater.com

## Be the first to know—sign up for emergency alerts

In this digital age, there are numerous ways to get information quickly. In an event like a public notification, DC Water will push information out to television, radio, web and print media, as well as social media. At the very same time, we send these notices to the list of individuals who have signed up for DC Water's news.

**To sign up for DC Water news, go to: [dcwater.com/signup](http://dcwater.com/signup).** There are three options. Select "DC Water news" to get public notifications and other notices and press releases. (For routine water outages, repairs and road closures, sign up for "DC Water Alerts.")

**The District of Columbia government has an emergency alert system.** AlertDC is the official District of Columbia communications system that sends alerts, notifications, and updates from public safety officials and the emergency manager. Learn about traffic conditions, government closures, public safety incidents and severe weather. To get started today, visit [hsema.dc.gov/page/alertdc](http://hsema.dc.gov/page/alertdc)

**Critical Customers Database** - Does your property protect the public's health and safety? Or protect the environment? Or service a susceptible population in the Authority's service area? If so, you may be a candidate for notifications through DC Water's mass notification system, Everbridge. Everbridge allows for multimodal messaging from the Authority to critical customers during an incident. To be considered for placement in the critical customer database, please complete the

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## Finding your emergency shut-off valve

When there is a water emergency, like a burst pipe or leaking plumbing, you may need to quickly shut off the water supply to your house. Here's how:

- Look for the main valve where the water supply enters your house (usually in the basement) or in a concrete box near the street.
- Turn the valve counter-clockwise until the water stops. Once repairs are made, remember to turn the valve back on.
- If you must evacuate when the weather is cold, then drain all water from the system, including your hot water heater.

Find your valve now so you don't have to look for it when you need it. Paint it with fluorescent paint or apply fluorescent tape so you can find it in the dark.



# How to conserve water in a crisis

Water conservation is key when DC Water needs to preserve its stored water as long as possible. There could be a water outage due to a large water main break or pump station failure. Another event that could initiate a conservation advisory could be a contaminant in the water source, such as when a chemical spills into the Potomac River, causing the water supplier to close its intakes on the river. There are various ways to conserve water.

### In the bathroom:

- Turn the tap off while shaving or brushing teeth.
- Showers use less water than baths, but take short showers.
- Flush the toilet less often. In most cases, several uses can be made of the toilet for liquid wastes before flushing is required.
- Brush your teeth before shaving in the morning so the cold water in the supply line is used instead of being wasted while you wait for hot water with which to shave.
- Use disposable diapers to avoid a toilet flush when rinsing a dirty diaper and to cut down on the amount of soiled laundry to be washed.

### In the kitchen:

- Plug up the sink or use a wash basin if washing dishes by hand. Better yet, use paper plates and plastic utensils.
- Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the faucet run until the water is cool.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator overnight rather than running a tap of hot water.

- Add food wastes to your compost pile instead of using the garbage disposal.
- Always use a brush, wash cloth, or your hand to dislodge particles of dirt when washing anything rather than relying on the force of the water to do the job.
- Clean vegetables in a pan filled with water rather than running water from the tap.
- Stock food that doesn't require cooking with water.

### In the laundry room:

- Hold off on doing laundry until the incident is over.

### Outdoor:

- No watering the lawn or landscaping.
- No filling pools, spas or hot tubs.
- No car washing.
- Always use a broom to clean walkways, driveways, decks and porches, rather than hosing off these areas.
- You may want to inspect your outside hoses and spigots to make sure none are leaking or left on.

## How much water do I need to store in a crisis?

It's an emergency! Numerous scenarios can make your tap water undrinkable or unusable—a severe weather event could damage or destroy water and sewer infrastructure. Or a contaminant coupled with a loss of pressure could cause concern of contamination. Residents should stay alert during a disaster and follow the directions of any drinking water advisories.

Residents should store enough water to last at least three days, and if possible, store enough water to last two weeks. How much do you need to store for drinking, for toilet flushing and for other uses?



### Hygiene

Remember, you likely won't have water to bathe or to wash dishes or do laundry. So, if you know in advance that the water shut-off or restrictions are coming, you can fill your bathtub, washtub, plastic tubs, large pots and pans and other containers with water to use for toilet flushing or for a quick sponge bath. Those who live in hurricane-prone areas are familiar with the practice of filling their bathtubs with water when a hurricane is projected for landfall.



OEM has added to its critical response fleet with a Tactical Command Vehicle that is smaller than the full Command Van. This vehicle is more easily deployed and provides capabilities such as satellite communications connectivity, surveillance of activity around the vehicle and in the field, workstations inside the vehicle, pipeline and manhole inspection system, and two generators. This vehicle has already been put to task, serving DC Water personnel during water main breaks, scheduled events, and even a deployment to a disaster area.

## DC Water is cutting edge in emergency management

DC Water's emergency management has grown from a one-person shop eight years ago to a full-fledged Office of Emergency Management (OEM) with highly trained staff who prepare for emergencies in various ways:

- Creating Emergency Response Plans and Public Notification Plans
- Scheduling and creating training exercises
- Providing technology and support vehicles
- Developing relationships with other agencies and the critical response community

OEM coordinates emergency responses, bringing together personnel from many departments. This office activates DC Water's Incident Management Team to respond to large emergencies such as a boil water advisory, a sinkhole or severe weather that might affect operations. We also activate the IMT when our normal operations won't suffice; for example, in the winter when we are triaging and repairing dozens of water main breaks all at once.

DC Water has a seat in the District's Emergency Operations Center – a physical location that brings together representatives from District agencies, utilities and other public services in one large operations center to manage large-scale event responses.

DC Water has its own 24-hour Emergency Command Center that responds to customer emergencies and tracks operations in the field, communicating with field crews, Metropolitan Police Department, DDOT and other agencies. If you have a water or sewer emergency, please call the 24-hour Command Center at **202-612-3400**.



### Drinking Water

For drinking, you should store a minimum of one gallon per person and per pet for each day. Keep your

water in air-tight containers, at room temperature, and away from direct sunlight.

Replace bottled water when it reaches the expiration date, or for non-store bought water, after six months. Use this water for drinking, cooking and brushing of teeth.



### Toilet Flushing

When you're in a situation where your water is restricted or shut off, here are tips to keep your toilet flowing.

- Flush your toilet with a bucket of water. It requires a gallon of water, poured directly into the toilet bowl.
- Start slowly at first, then quickly add the rest of the water into the bowl. The shape of the toilet and the pressure from the water in the bucket pushes everything through the pipes.

- There's no need to use the handle or empty the toilet tank. Save the water in the tank for another day of water restrictions.

- If it's yellow, let it mellow. If it's brown, flush it down.

### How much water in total do I need?

1 gallon for drinking + 2 gallons for hygiene/flushing = 3 gallons per person per day; 9 gallons per person for 72 hours; and 42 gallons per person for 2 weeks. If necessary, you can use the water in your water heater for toilet flushing.



## Flooding and sewer backups due to rain

Prepare for flooding by reviewing your insurance coverage. Helpful information can be found at [disb.dc.gov/page/evaluate-your-need-flood-insurance](https://disb.dc.gov/page/evaluate-your-need-flood-insurance) and [disb.dc.gov/page/five-reminders-about-your-insurance-coverage](https://disb.dc.gov/page/five-reminders-about-your-insurance-coverage)

If you have experienced a sewer back-up due to a flooding event you might be eligible to participate in DC Water's floodproofing prevention rebate or backwater valve rebate program. Please visit: [dcwater.com/faqbfp](https://dcwater.com/faqbfp).

## Sign up for emergency alerts

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online critical customer survey to help determine if your facility qualifies: [dcwater.com/criticalcustomer](https://dcwater.com/criticalcustomer). Please be sure to include after hours contact information as well!

Updating your customer information on the Customer portal ([mydcwater.com](https://mydcwater.com)) or with an associate in our Customer Care Department may help us reach you, too.

When we issue a public notification like the recent boil water advisory, we encourage those who receive it to share the information with everyone in the affected area, especially those who may not have received the notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, hotels and businesses). This can be done by printing copies and posting by apartment mailboxes and emailing to property managers.

We are working on even more methods to alert the public during an emergency and look forward to sharing that information with you soon.

## If you see something, say something

We are all familiar with the campaign to motivate bystanders to report suspicious activity. That applies to the District's water system as well. If you see something unusual, for instance someone hooking up to a fire hydrant, or tampering with a fire hydrant, or behaving oddly around a pump station, report it. You can call **911** or **DC Water's 24-hour Command Center** at **202-612-3400**.

DC Water employs a robust Security force to keep buildings secure and who can respond to calls of suspicious behavior.



**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY**  
Customer Service Department | (202) 354-3600  
5000 Overlook Avenue, SW, Suite 400, Washington DC 20032

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