

Pipeline

WASHINGTON SUBURBAN SANITARY COMMISSION

www.wsscwater.com

WSSC on alert for broken pipes

Cold weather poses challenges to all water systems. Here in the DC region, the chances for water main breaks can jump in severe winters or when temperatures fluctuate widely. In the past several winters, for every hour spent on planned pipe maintenance, emergency crews have spent three hours or more responding to breaks. It's a costly and troublesome pattern and as WSSC's 5,300 miles of water pipe get older we face an escalating trend for problems.

WSSC provides a reliable supply of safe drinking water, and has always met or exceeded U.S. Environmental Protection Agency health standards. Providing clean water at affordable rates will continue to be our highest priority, but as WSSC approaches 90 years of service, we are facing the same problem confronting water providers across the country — our old pipes and valves are decaying.

Aging and breaking pipes affect more than the skilled WSSC crews who respond 24 hours a day to fix broken water mains and sewer pipes. A major water main break results in a shut-down of water delivery to homes and businesses. It has the potential to flood roadways and affect electrical service. It even hurts our rivers and streams when chlorinated water enters a waterway.

Plans are already underway to speed up the replacement cycle for pipes, especially in established areas where the pipes are quickly reaching the end of their reliability. But in the meantime, the public's help in responding quickly to water outages is essential. If you see water gushing from an underground source, or otherwise suspect a water main break, sanitary sewer overflow, or a sewer back up, please call our 24-hour emergency response number at (301) 206-4002. WSSC teams are ready to roll.



WSSC crews are spending more and more time fixing emergency water main breaks, with less time available for planned upgrades and maintenance, resulting in more customers facing longer water service outages.



WSSC looks to the wind

In a move that will make WSSC the country's largest local government user of renewable energy in the United States, the agency recently signed a ten-year wind power agreement that will supply one-third of its electricity needs while saving WSSC an estimated \$20 million dollars over the life of the contract.

According to WSSC General Manager Andrew Brunhart, this is a win-win-win: it helps shield the agency from volatile electricity prices, which in turn will temper any future hikes for our customers. And as the fastest growing source of power on the planet, wind power is also a significant element in efforts to slow or reverse global warming.

"Using wind to power the movement of water is a natural and necessary next step in our commitment to environmental excellence," explained Brunhart. "It will help reduce global warming — as well as help to reduce our country's reliance on foreign oil."

Under the power agreement with Baltimore's Constellation Energy Projects & Services Group, Inc., WSSC will pay a fixed price per megawatt hour and expects to use approximately 70,000 megawatt hours of wind power per year. The contract, which goes into effect in 2008, will purchase 85 percent of the power generated by a wind farm that will be built in Pennsylvania.

WSSC's action receives praise from area leaders

"I commend the WSSC for embarking on this clean energy initiative and hope that other major power users will follow its lead," said U.S. Representative Chris Van Hollen, who is working in Congress to encourage the development of renewable energy sources.

The director of the Maryland Energy Administration also commended WSSC's effort. "It is purchases like these which will help stimulate clean, renewable energy markets in Maryland while also improving our environment," explained Frederick Davis.

UNDERSTANDING WSSC RATES & BILLING

Our 16-step, conservation-oriented billing structure can be difficult to understand—particularly for new customers. Here’s how it works. How much you pay depends on your “average daily consumption,” or ADC. To calculate your ADC, the total water usage during a billing period is divided by the number of days. For example, if you’ve used 20,000 gallons of water during a 90-day billing period, your ADC would be 222 gallons (20,000 gallons divided by 90 days). The corresponding rate for this ADC is \$2.68 for every 1,000 gallons of water used, and \$4.21 for every 1,000 gallons of sewer.

(Sewer charges are based on the amount of water used, unless you have a “sub-meter” to measure the water used outdoors.) The more water you use in any one billing period, the higher the rate charged for every 1,000 gallons. In our service area, each person typically uses about 70 gallons of water each day. Check the back of your bill for a copy of our rate schedule. If you have any questions about your bill, please call our Customer Care Center at 301-206-4001.

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission Current Water and Sewer Rates (effective July 1, 2006)

Consumption (in gallons) ADC* Range	Water Rate Per 1,000 Gallons	Sewer Rate Per 1,000 Gallons	Combined Water and Sewer Rate Per 1,000 Gallons
0 - 49	\$1.67	\$2.45	\$4.12
50 - 99	1.87	2.85	4.72
100 - 149	2.04	3.36	5.40
150 - 199	2.30	3.85	6.15
200 - 249	2.68	4.21	6.89
250 - 299	2.90	4.55	7.45
300 - 349	3.07	4.86	7.93
350 - 399	3.21	5.09	8.30
400 - 449	3.33	5.21	8.54
450 - 499	3.42	5.38	8.80
500 - 749	3.48	5.49	8.97
750 - 999	3.57	5.60	9.17
1,000 - 3,999	3.64	5.84	9.48
4,000 - 6,999	3.72	5.98	9.70
7,000 - 8,999	3.76	6.06	9.82
9,000 & Greater	3.84	6.22	10.06

*Average Daily Consumption

Flat Rate Sewer Charge-\$66.00 per quarter



Inclement Weather and Meter Reading

We make every effort to provide bills based on actual water use. During colder months, however, snow, ice, and sleet can prevent meter readers from accessing your meter. In that case, your bill may be based on estimated usage, rather than actual usage. Estimated bills for residential customers are generally based on actual usage at the same time the previous year, or on an historical daily average. Please pay your estimated bill as you would a regular, actual bill. When we read your meter in the spring, the estimated charges will be canceled and your account re-billed from the last actual reading to the current reading. Of course, your estimated bill payment will be applied to the re-billed charges.

Can the Grease to Prevent Sewer Back-Ups

Pouring cooking grease down the kitchen drain can lead to costly (and messy) sewer back-ups when the grease turns solid and clogs the sewer pipes. To prevent blockages, pour cooled grease into a can (a soup can works great) and throw in the trash. Sewer blockages can also be caused by personal hygiene products and diapers flushed down the toilet. Use the wastebasket instead! Sometimes vandalism or illegal disposal of debris into the sewer system also cause sewer overflows. With 5,200 miles of sewer pipe throughout our service area, WSSC appreciates notification if you see wastewater coming from a manhole cover site. Call 301-206-4002 or toll free 1-800-828-6439 at any time to report suspected sewer overflows.



Interested in Doing Business With WSSC?



If you own a small, local business enterprise in either Prince George’s County or Montgomery County, we want to work with you. To learn about current WSSC contracts, check our website at www.wsscwater.com and click Business/contracting opportunities. In addition, the members of our team who liaison with small and local businesses are available to help you identify which area your products and services best fit.

Call 301-206-8800 to learn more.

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