

WATERWORKS

Provided as a public service for our customers and neighbors

2020 Edition

We would like to inform our residents that most of our employees are working from home to provide continuous essential resident services. The District is following the guidelines of the CDC to work from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Until there is a decline in the COVID-19 rate of infections, District administrative employees will not be returning to work at the district offices. However, our Field Operations crew will continue to be on site, to service facilities, as is required by TCEQ regulations. The District's top priority is to protect the health and safety of our employees while providing essential services to our residents.

Even though the District administrative offices are closed, residents have a number of options for establishing new service, disconnecting services and paying water bills. You can pay bills online, by phone, enroll in ACH payment option, or place your payment in the drop-off box located inside the Pheasant Creek Shell Station at the corner of Old Richmond Rd. and Pheasant Creek Dr.

Do you need help paying your bills? There are organizations who will help you!! Contact St. Theresa's Catholic Church in Sugar Land or East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry!! Both organizations provide assistance to residents who need help paying water bills.

****There is a merchant fee of \$3.05 fee if paying with a credit card or an electronic check****

Thank you for your cooperation!



YOU ARE THE SOLUTION TO POLLUTION!

SEWER SYSTEMS NEED FAT-FREE DIETS TOO!

The District needs your help to keep our sewer systems clean. You can help the District by not flushing wipes and/or paper towels down the toilet. Flushing down any type of non-flushable items down the toilet can

cause sewer line back-ups, overflowing toilets and even damages to indoor plumbing. Repairing sewer line back-ups is very costly and can also pose a threat to human health and present an extra challenge to our water utilities and our workforce. Other things that can damage the sewer lines are pouring grease, food scraps, and oils down the drain.

The medical community has spoken loud and clear: less grease and fat consumed by humans helps make humans healthier. However, did you know that the same fat-free mandate contributes to healthier sewer systems and water supplies?

Oil and grease pollution from urban storm waters is an important and growing water quality and sewer system problem. Rivers and groundwater that were once pure have become polluted and life threatening. Grease, fats, and oil contribute to blocked sanitary sewer systems leading to sewage overflows. The main culprits are improper disposal of fat, oil and grease from food preparation, which create back-ups and other problems in sewer systems. While residents and food preparation facilities may find it inconvenient to dispose properly of grease, fat and oil, residents will find it more inconvenient and expensive to unclog blockages and cleanup spills.

“Municipalities are under great pressure to better manage the wastewater collected, treated, and discharged to the

environment. Hence, to accomplish the main objective, cleaner discharge and protection of the receiving streams and sediments, effective pollution control devices are needed,” said T. Duncan Ellison, executive director of the Canadian Water and Waste Water Association (CAW) at the Air & Waste Management Association (ALMA) Annual Conference and Exhibition in Anaheim, California on June 18, 2003. Water discharges from industrial, commercial, and other facilities are governed by a variety of federal, state, and municipal laws. Wastewater managers, businesses that generate fats, oil and grease and residents must be aware of new standards regarding prohibited waste substances. The best method for avoiding grease and fat in the sewer systems is to NEVER pour grease, fat, oil down the sink or floor drains. Instead, place cooking oils, grease and fats into a can or container with a secure lid and dispose of properly as designated by your community regulations or the county/regional Environmental Protection Agency

Water Conservation

Did you know that the District has options to help you save money?

All you have to do to save money is...

1. JOIN THE DISTRICT'S IMMEDIATE REBATE PROGRAM!

All you have to do is:

- Install a High Efficiency Toilet (HET)
- Install a Water Smart Irrigation System
- Install a Rain Barrel Harvesting System

Once you have installed any of the above, you must provide a copy of proof of purchase and contact us to make an appointment for one of the District's Inspectors to visit your residence to verify installation (will photograph as part of the verification process).

2. INSTALL FLOW SHOWER HEADS AT NOT COST TO YOU!

The District will provide two (2) low flow showerheads to all residential customer at NO COST to YOU, the customer. You can: Complete the Low Flow Showerhead Order Form on our website, www.waterdistrict25.com, or come by our office and ask one of representatives for a Low Flow Shower Head.

3. ENROLL IN THE ANNUAL WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM!

You can earn credits on your water bill!

- In order to be eligible to participate, the customer must have had services in the District for one year prior to enrollment date.
- For this one-year period, the billing and collection staff will compare the resident's current water usage (gallons used) to water usage for the same period in the previous year.
- Every 6 months in the defined 12 month period that the customer uses less water (measured in total gallons used) compared to the water used for the same period in the previous year, the resident will receive a 10% rebate in the form of a credit to their water bill (based on current year's usage with a maximum credit of \$75.00 per account.) For the months in the current billing cycle when total gallons used equals or exceeds amounts used compared to the same period in the previous year, no credit will be issued.
- The conservation rebate program ends 365 days from the date the resident joins the program. To sign up for further rebates, the resident must voluntarily sign up for a new one-year commitment.

Residents who wish to join the Water Conservation Program must contact the billing office at 281-277-0129, option 2 and agree to participate in the program for one year or visit the District's website:

<https://waterdistrict25.com/water-conservation/>



SOME STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT PROTECTING A PRECIOUS NATURAL RESOURCE...

Consider this scenario -- It's early on a lovely morning...the birds are chirping...insects are buzzing...and households are beginning to stir. Folks are turning on their coffee makers, stepping into their morning showers, or perhaps starting a load of laundry or the dishwasher full of dinner dishes from the night before.

Then, suddenly, the stream of water in the shower slows to a trickle and appliances choke and sputter without their customary water supply. The culprit? Up and down hundreds of streets, sprinkler system controls

all spring into action at the same time... sending thousands and thousands of gallons of water airborne to fall on lawns and gardens that don't even need it.

Is it possible that we'd ever really have to choose between a nice hot morning shower and watering the lawn? Absolutely. If we don't take steps to reign in our community's voracious early morning appetite for water, the choice might come up as early as this summer! Fortunately, there are some relatively simple actions we can take to get our peak water usage under control. All we need is your help.

Let's start with the easiest and most effective options.

1. **Don't over-water your lawn and plants.** Native grasses only need water if there is no rain for prolonged periods. In most weather conditions, it is only necessary to water twice a week. More than that "spoils" your lawn by creating a shallow root system that is always "thirsty."
2. **Set your irrigation system to complete the water cycle by 4 a.m.** to avoid the early morning peak demand for water.
3. **Get in the habit NOW of watering only on odd or even days...** Even house numbers, water on Sundays and Thursdays, and odd numbers water on Saturdays and Wednesdays. That doesn't mean you have to water on each of your odd or even days...but stick to your schedule when you do. For established lawns, there is no reason not to follow this schedule. If everyone complied, this one action could immediately cut our early morning peak demand enough to ensure adequate water through the summer.
4. **Purchase and install a rain sensor for your irrigation system.** This is guaranteed to save both water and money. And, you'll minimize the chance that your sprinklers come on while it is raining - which annoys anyone who appreciates this finite natural resource and hates to see it wasted.

You can now see your usage on the MyWater MUD25 Smart Phone App!

All you have to do is install the District's Smart Phone Application (MyWater MUD25) at **No Cost to You!** Enjoy the convenience of having your water use information at your fingertips. You will be able to view your usage daily and detect/repair leaks at your home as soon as they occur!

Other benefits of the smart phone app include:

- a) The ability to be informed of any planned outages
- b) Review your billing information
- c) Water Conservation tips

You can download the MyWater MUD25 phone app on both Android and iOS devices from the Apple iTunes Store and Google Play Store. Once you have downloaded the MyWater MUD25 app, you can check out this video to learn how to register your account:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnbrQ4UoCOM>



BACKFLOW DEVICES KEEP YOU SAFE!

Do you have an irrigation system and/or a pool?
If the answer is **yes**, make sure you have a backflow prevention device installed.

What is a backflow prevention device and why do you need one?

Residents who install a swimming pool and/or an irrigation system for your yard, are required to have a backflow prevention device that must be inspected by licensed District operators. Most people probably have no idea what the pipes and valves are for, and unless they were told during the installation of the pool or sprinklers, they wouldn't know that this equipment plays a critical role in protecting your home's potable water system from contamination.

Backflow may occur in the event of either back siphonage or backpressure. Back siphonage can happen when the pressure in the distribution system drops, drawing water from the consumer's plumbing back into it. Pressure drops might occur in the event of a line break, or high-water demand such as fighting a fire nearby. Backpressure can cause backflow when a potable water system is connected to another system that operates at a higher pressure such as an irrigation system.

Water distribution systems are designed to have the water flow from the water treatment plant to the consumer, but whenever a cross-connection in a plumbing system takes place (when the potable water supply is connected to a non-potable source) contamination can occur if not protected. If a plumbing system is modified, there is potential to create cross-connections.

So, what is the danger? First of all, your yard and landscaped areas are full of potentially nasty things that you don't want in your drinking water.... like pesticides, fertilizers and animal waste. If your pool or irrigation systems are not properly installed and protected with these devices, your system is vulnerable to backflow. Most of the time, the pressure in the system will keep the water from flowing backward, but as mentioned earlier, a sudden pressure drop caused by a firetruck, or if the lines are shut down to repair a broken pipe, can trigger a backflow situation in surrounding neighborhoods.

Still not convinced? Here is an experiment you can do yourself. Turn off the water valve leading to your house. Next, turn on a faucet in the kitchen or downstairs bathroom. Then go to a higher level in the house and turn on another faucet. You will hear air being sucked into the higher faucet. You just created backflow in your plumbing system. Not too difficult to do, right?

Backflow prevention devices protect all of us from the possibility of contaminants entering our drinking water system. If you have not had yours inspected for proper operation, call the District's Billing office, and ask that a licensed operator inspect your backflow device. Safety in our drinking water system is an important responsibility that we all share.



PROTECTING YOUR STORM DRAIN SYSTEMS!

In most urban and suburban areas, your street connects to downstream lakes, wetlands and streams through the storm sewer system. Water runs off your street and yard rapidly through storm sewers carrying pollutants collected along the way, directly into our lakes and rivers. In essence, we all live on the waterfront and have a duty to protect future water sources. Storm water runoff becomes a problem when it picks up and carries debris, chemicals, dirt and other pollutants as it flows or when it causes flooding and erosion of stream banks or when people deliberately contaminate storm sewers by illegally dumping hazardous substances and chemicals into storm sewers. Pesticides, fertilizers, oil and soap are harmful in any quantity. Sediment from construction, bare soil, agricultural land, pet waste, grass clippings, plastic water bottles and leaves harm creeks, rivers, lakes, all receiving streams, if dumped in sufficient quantities. Various human activities like watering, car washing, and malfunctioning septic tanks can also put water at risk. Here, the runoff carries pollutants to creeks, rivers and lakes. Polluted runoff generally happens anywhere people use or alter the land. For example, in developed areas, none of the water that falls on hard surfaces like roofs, driveways, parking lots or roads can seep into the ground. The impervious surfaces create large amounts of runoff that picks up pollutants. The runoff flows from gutters and storm drains to streams. Runoff not only pollutes but also erodes stream banks. The mix of pollution and eroded dirt muddies the water and causes problems downstream. Polluted storm water runoff is the number one cause of water pollution in Texas. Polluted water creates numerous costs to the public and to wildlife.



Communities that use surface water for their drinking supply must pay much more to clean up polluted water than clean water. Polluted water hurts the wildlife in creeks, streams, rivers and lakes. Dirt from erosion, also called sediment, covers up fish habitats while fertilizers can cause too much algae to grow, which also hurts wildlife by using up the oxygen they need to survive. Soaps hurt fish gills and fish skin, and other chemicals damage plants and animals when they enter

the water. Why should you care? Streams and creeks feed into rivers, lakes and eventually the ocean. We all drink water, so all are affected when our water is polluted. When water treatment costs rise, the price of drinking water goes up. Additionally, if you like to fish, swim or boat, you may have heard or been affected by advisories warning you not to swim, fish or boat in a certain area because of unhealthy water or too much algae. Shellfish like clams, oysters, and shrimp cannot be harvested from polluted waters, so anyone that enjoys these foods or makes a living from the shellfish industry is affected. Money made from tourism and water recreation is adversely impacted, as are businesses and homes flooded by storm water runoff.

When we pollute our water, everyone is affected! Polluted storm water runoff is a leading cause of impairment to the nearly 40 percent of surveyed U.S. water bodies do not meet water quality standards. Over land or via storm sewer systems, polluted runoff is discharged directly into local water bodies. Water pollution can result in the destruction of fish, wildlife, and aquatic life habitats; a loss in aesthetic value; and threats to public health due to contaminated food, drinking water supplies, and recreational waterways.

The Environmental Protection Agency introduced The Federal Clean Water Act, which requires towns, cities, military bases, special districts and municipalities to take steps to reduce polluted storm water runoff include enforcement action and financial penalties for failure to comply. Residents who violate Rate Order and other regulatory laws can be fined up to \$5,000.00 per day as costs for remediation for violating laws that protect our storm water systems. However, the bigger cost is the potential threat to human life and safety. Additionally, every item put in our storm drains ends up in receiving streams, wasting the receiving capability of a precious resource when drainage is needed during heavy rainfalls.

The District provides a number for reporting those who contaminate our storm water system. Thus, if you see anyone in the act of dumping hazardous chemicals, grease, paint, plastic, grass, etc. into District storm water drains, please call **1-866-414-9950**. Think about it; the only source for water to drain is via the storm drains to receiving streams. Further, water is **WATER** so the life or home you save, by reporting violations, could be your own or that of your children.

WATER CONSERVATION AND CONSUMER EDUCATION...

The Cornerstones of a Successful Water Management Strategy

The District's partnership with our schools continues to be a huge success! The District's youngest consumers believe education about water conservation and saving our public waterways is important!

Water conservation is critical if we are to ensure an ample supply for future generations. A key component of water conservation is consumer education. The end user must implement good water use practices or water conservation does not occur.

One part of the District's consumer education program includes our partnership with Macario Garcia Middle School. The District and Garcia Middle school hold an annual Calendar Contest to be sure our youngest consumers understand the importance of saving water and protecting

the public waterways via our storm drains. Based on the drawings provided by the children, we are pleased to say our children have a unique and thorough understanding of what must be accomplished to save water for the future."

A very special thank you to Carol Rodriguez, Executive Administrative Assistant for the District, who, in concert with all the people named below, managed to bring a plethora of pieces together to make sure the event was properly executed.

To see this year's results, please check out our website:

<https://waterdistrict25.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Calendar-Fort-Bend.pdf>

