

FORT BEND COUNTY
MUNICIPAL UTILITY
DISTRICT NO. 25

WATER WORKS

USEFUL FACTS ABOUT YOUR WATER DISTRICT

Board Adopts Contingency Plan for Water Supply Emergencies

Last fall, the Board of Directors approved a comprehensive **Drought Contingency Plan**, required by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC). This Plan provides for specific actions to be taken in the event of mild to severe drought conditions or in an emergency such as a hurricane, natural disaster or an equipment failure. With the higher water demand during the months of summer and hurricane season just around the corner, your Board wants you to become familiar with how we will ensure that an adequate supply of water is maintained.

For more than five years, we have been publishing articles in our newsletter -- and subsequently on our website -- about the importance of using our water resources wisely. We include another feature containing water conservation tips in this issue. This is important information, and we encourage you to make a commitment to avoid wasting this precious commodity whenever possible. If we encounter drought conditions or experience an emergency that restricts our access to water, our residents will be directed to follow restrictions that range from voluntary to mandatory with penalties imposed for violations.

The Plan is based on a series of *Trigger Conditions* or situations which may occur that would cause the Plan to be in effect. These triggers include, but are not limited to: (a) Reduction in available water supply up to a repeat of the drought of record; (b) Water production or distribution system limitations; (c) Supply source contamination; or (d) Water system outage due to the failure or damage of major water system components.

There are three levels of drought conditions defined in the Plan: **1. Mild Drought** -- when demand on the District's water supply facilities reaches or exceeds eighty percent of the production capacity of those facilities for 5 consecutive days.

Continued on page 7



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Frequently Asked Questions About Your Water Bill

Residents often have questions about their water and sewer bills.

Here are some of ones asked the most frequently:

- Q. When is the bill due?** **A.** Payment for your water bill is due, and must be in the District office, by the 24th of each month. The bill is considered past due if received in the District office after the 24th of the month and is subject to penalties and delinquent letter fees. **If the water is disconnected, a re-connect fee of \$ 50.00, PLUS a \$75.00 deposit will be required if none on file.**
- Q. What if I don't receive my bill?** **A.** Bills are mailed to all customers monthly. The District is not responsible for errors that may occur due to problems with delivery of mail. You are responsible for ensuring your bill is paid in a timely manner.
- Q. What if my payment becomes lost and is never received by your office?** **A.** Again, the District is not responsible for payments lost in transit (including payments lost in the mail and/or losses associated with online transactions).
- Q. What if the bill is paid after the 24th?** **A.** You will incur a \$5.00 delinquent letter fee for the reminder mailed to you in addition to penalties which accrue on the unpaid bill.
- Q. Where do I pay the bill?** **A.** For your convenience, we have three ways you can pay your bill:
1. Bills can be paid in the District office. The District office is located at 18230 Old Richmond Road, between Voss and FM 1464 (on the Sewage Treatment Plant site, between the subdivisions of Pheasant Creek and Summerfield).
2. You can save postage by dropping your payment in the drop box at the Pheasant Creek Food Mart (Texaco) at the corner of Old Richmond Road and Pheasant Creek Drive.
3. Mail to Fort Bend County MUD No. 25, P.O. Box 2847, Sugar Land, TX 77487-2847. If you decide to use the drop box or mail your payment, you should mail or drop off in advance of the date due to ensure receipt in our offices by the 24th.
- Q. Where are you located?** **A.** The address is 18230 Old Richmond Road, Sugar Land, TX. 77478. The temporary offices are two small trailers located at the site of the Sewage Treatment Plant. Groundbreaking on the permanent building was in December.
- Q. When does Fort Bend County MUD No. 25 pick up payments from the drop box and post office box?** **A.** Payments at the post office and the drop box are picked up daily, Monday – Friday, by 7:15 a.m.

Continued next page

Frequently Asked Questions...continued

Q. Who do I call if I have a problem with my bill?

A. Call 281-277-0129 and ask to speak with someone in the billing department.

Q. What does the voluntary donation for “amb” mean?

A. The \$ 2.50 voluntary donation is a fee that is collected and forwarded to the voluntary fire and ambulance service provider that responds to calls within Fort Bend County MUD No. 25. If you do not wish to pay this fee, your account will be adjusted accordingly.

Q. What are the District’s base rates?

A. The District’s base rates are listed in the rate order and can be reviewed in the District office or on the District web site (www.waterdistrict25.com). Please note the rate order is subject to periodic revisions.

Please be patient while we conduct our business in the temporary trailers. Our new building is under construction and should be finished by June 2001. Each call is very important to us and every customer will be given the best possible customer service. Thank You! ♦

(Rev.04-10-01)



Tax Reduction for Over 65, Disabled and Disabled Vets

The tax rate for the District is \$0.975 per \$100 valuation. What this means is that for every \$100 of the value of a house, the District charges \$0.975. To determine the total tax for a house valued at \$100,000, divide the value by 100 and then multiply by \$0.975. In this case, \$100,000 divided by 100 equals 1000, and multiplying by \$0.975 gives a tax of \$975.00.

The District currently offers a \$10,000.00 exemption for both *disabled persons* and people who are age 65 or older. This allows a \$97.50 reduction in the taxes of those eligible. A resident can only utilize ONE exemption, so those eligible often chose the “Over 65” because it has a bigger effect on their school taxes.

Using the example of the \$100,000 house above, to find the total after the exemption, subtract \$10,000, then divide by 100, multiply by \$0.975, and the tax is \$877.50 or \$97.50 less.

The District does not grant a regular homestead exemption at this time. There is, however, a *Disabled Vet* exemption that ranges from \$5,000.00 to \$12,000.00 reduction off the value.

For additional information, contact Tommy Lee at Assessments of the Southwest at (281) 482-0216, or e-mail him at aswtommy@subell.net. ♦

Kid’s Conservation Project...



When Mom or Dad turns on the sprinkler to water the grass, do you know how to figure out much water the sprinkler “delivers”? The next time the lawn needs watering, place some empty cans or jars in several places around the lawn. Turn on the sprinkler and let it run for half an hour. Add the total amount of water captured in all the receptacles (in inches), and then divide by the number of jars to get the average. Simply multiply by two if you want to know how much water is “sprinkled” in an hour. In the Houston area, experts recommend watering every five days to apply .75 to 1 inch of water (subtracting any rainfall) during summer months. This amount will wet the soil to a depth of 4-6 inches.



WHY CONSERVE WATER? WHY NOT?



In Texas, our conventional fresh-water supplies are already 75 to 80 percent developed. That's why the more efficient use of our precious water resources through water conservation and reuse makes economic sense, both to preserve and extend limited water supplies and to save Texans real money.

The biggest potential saver is you, the water customer. Consider that even a 10 to 15 percent reduction in personal water use can save Texas' water and sewer rate payers billions of dollars over the next 50 years. The effort to conserve water must begin now, however, with everyone's participation and support.

Here are some ways to save both water and money at home:



◆ For an investment of \$10 to \$20, homeowners can install two low-flow shower heads, place dams or bottles in the toilet tank, install low-flow aerators on the faucets, and repair dripping faucets and leaking toilets. This could save the average household 10,000 to 25,000 gallons each year for a fam-

ily of four, and would pay for itself in less than a year! Even more savings can be realized if good outdoor water conservation is practiced for the lawn and garden.

◆ When building a new home or remodeling a bathroom, install a new low-volume flush toilet that uses only 1.6 gallons per flush.



◆ Test toilets for leaks. Add a few drops of food coloring to the water in the toilet tank, but do not flush the toilet. Watch to see if the coloring appears in the bowl within a few minutes. If it does, the toilet has a silent leak that needs to be repaired.

◆ Use some type of toilet tank displacement device to reduce the volume of water in the tank, but still provide enough for flushing. (Bricks are NOT recommended because they eventually crumble and could damage the working mechanisms.) Displacement devices are not recommended with new low-volume flush toilets.

◆ Do not use hot water when cold water will do. Period.

In the kitchen...

◆ Scrape the dishes clean instead of rinsing them before placing them in the dishwasher.

◆ Fill a pan of water — or put a stopper in the sink — for washing and rinsing pots, pans, dishes, and



cooking implements rather than turning on the water faucet each time a rinse is needed.

◆ Never run the dishwasher without a full load. This will save water, energy, detergent and money.

◆ Keep a container of drinking water in the refrigerator. Running water from the tap until it is cool enough to drink is wasteful.

◆ Use a small pan of cold water when cleaning vegetables rather than letting the water run over them.

◆ Use less water for cooking. Not only does it save water, but also food is more nutritious when the vitamins and minerals are not "boiled" out of them and poured down the sink with the extra water.

◆ Always keep water conservation in mind. Avoid doing wasteful things like making a huge pot of coffee if you're only going to drink one or two cups, or even throwing away a glass full of ice after it cooled a few swallows of water. These things may not seem like much, but they add up over time.

In the Laundry...

◆ It may surprise you to know that 32 to 59 gallons of water are required for each washing machine load! Wash only full loads of clothes when using your washing machine.

◆ Use the lowest possible water

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level setting on the washing machine.

- ◆ Use cold water whenever possible. This saves energy, too, and conserves the hot water for other uses. This is also better for most of today's fabrics.

Appliances and Plumbing...

- ◆ When purchasing new appliances, check the water requirements of various models and brands. Some use less water than others.

- ◆ Check water line connections and faucets for leaks. A slow drip can waste as much as 170 gallons of water EACH DAY, or 5,000 gallons a month. This will increase your water bill.

- ◆ Repair leaky faucets promptly. It is easy to do, it costs very little and can make a substantial savings in your water bills.

- ◆ Make sure that the line from the water meter to your house is free of leaks. To check, turn off all indoor and outdoor faucets and water-using appliances. The water meter should be read at 10 to 20 minute intervals. If it continues to run or turn, a leak probably exists and needs to be located.

- ◆ Insulate all hot water pipes to reduce the delays (and wasted

water) experienced while waiting for the water to heat up.

- ◆ Set the thermostat on the hot water heater at a reasonable level. Extremely hot settings waste water (because it takes some extra cold water to make it usable) and energy and can even cause minor burns.

Outdoor Use...



- ◆ Water only when needed and do not over-water. Soil can absorb only so much moisture, and the rest will simply run off. A timer can help. In the summer months, one and a half inches of water applied once a week will keep most Texas grasses alive and healthy.

- ◆ The best time to water lawns is in the morning during the hot summer months. Otherwise, much of the water can simply evaporate between the sprinkler and the lawn.

- ◆ Use a sprinkler that throws large drops of water — rather than a fine mist — to avoid evaporation. Sprinklers that send the water out on a low angle also help control evaporation.

- ◆ Set automatic sprinkler systems to provide thorough, but infrequent, watering. Rain shut-off devices can prevent watering in the rain.



- ◆ Use drip irrigation systems for bedded plants, trees or shrubs, or turn soaker hoses upside-down so the holes are on the bottom. This will help avoid evaporation.

- ◆ Don't water the streets, driveways or sidewalks...they will never grow a thing!

- ◆ Condition the soil with mulch or compost before planting grass or flower beds so the water will sink in rather than run off.

- ◆ Do not "scalp" lawns when mowing during hot weather. Taller grass holds moisture better.



- ◆ Use a watering can or hand water with a hose in small areas of the lawn that need extra attention and for small flower beds along walks and driveways. Hanging baskets can sometimes be watered more efficiently by taking them down and placing them in the path of a sprinkler instead of running water through the hose.

- ◆ Don't "sweep" walks and decks with water. Use a broom or rake instead.

- ◆ Consider planting water-wise plants. Learn what types of grass, shrubbery, and bedding plants do best in our community. Choose plants that have low water needs, are drought-tolerant, and are adapted to the area in which they will be planted.

Water Conservation is making the most efficient use of our state's precious water resources. PRACTICE IT!

Backflow Prevention Devices Help Safeguard the Water Supply

When water flows backwards through the water supply system, it is called *backsiphonage* or *backflow*. When that water is accidentally mixed with hazardous chemicals or bacteria, it can be dangerous...even fatal!

The danger could come from improperly installed pools and sprinkler systems. And did you know that you are required to have your water district inspect the installation if you have a pool or sprinkler system added to your home?



Another potential danger to the water system comes in the form of your water hose. Did you know the hose — any hose — could contaminate the water supply if it is connected to a harmful substance and the pressure in the water main line drops while your hose is submerged in polluted or contami-

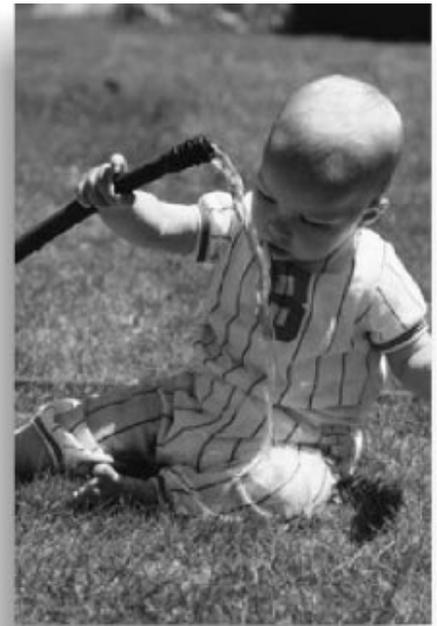
nated water? The water (and whatever is in it) could be sucked back into your pipes and your drinking water supply.



Water pressure drops can happen when firefighters battle a nearby blaze or when repairs are made due to a broken water line. Some harmful substances you should be wary of are the chemicals used to fertilize and kill weeds on your lawn. The cleansers used in your kitchen and bathroom could be hazardous if swallowed, as could bacteria in the water from your pool or waterbed.

Fortunately, keeping your water safe from these contaminants is not that difficult to do. Take the following precautions to protect your drinking water:

- ◆ Buy and install inexpensive backflow prevention devices for all



threaded faucets around your home. They are usually available at hardware stores and home improvement centers.

- ◆ If you install a pool or sprinkler system, have a representative from your water district inspect the device for proper installation.
- ◆ Never submerge hoses in buckets, pools, tubs or sinks.
- ◆ Always keep the end of the hose clear of possible contaminants.
- ◆ Do not use spray attachments without a backflow prevention device. The chemicals used on your lawn are toxic and can be fatal if ingested.

Avoid Wasting Water on Your Lawn and Garden this Summer...



The summer months are just around the corner, and everyone wants to keep yards and landscaping looking great. Unfortunately, as much as half of our outdoor use of water in the warmer months is wasted because of poor watering practices. This can take quite a toll on the water bill since 50 to 80 percent of our water consumption during those months is used outside. We have taken our water resources for granted for so long that some wasteful habits die hard. This is a good time to take a realistic look at the way you use water for lawn and garden. It makes good common sense to learn to use this valuable resource more efficiently to save both water and money.

Drought Contingency...

Continued from page 1

2. Moderate Drought -- when demand on the District's water supply facilities reaches or exceeds ninety percent of the production capacity of such facilities for 5 consecutive days; and

3. Severe Drought -- when demand on the District's water supply facilities reaches or exceeds one hundred percent of the production capacity of such facilities for 24 hours.

Once one of these triggers has occurred, the District may notify the water users by any of the following: mail, posting of signs at entrances to the District, posting notices at public places in the District, and by notifying the local media. These notices will contain this specific information: (a) The date the measures will begin; (b) The date the measures will terminate if known; (c) A list of the measures to be implemented; and (d) An explanation of penalties for violations.

In the event of a Mild Drought, residents will be asked to voluntarily reduce their water use. Outdoor water use -- watering lawns and gardens, washing cars and window washing -- will be limited through an odd/even program. Residents with odd-numbered street addresses may water on odd-numbered days, and even-numbered on even numbered days.

When no street numbers exist, residents living on the north and west side of a street may water on even-numbered days, and south and east use water on odd-numbered days. In this trigger stage, outdoor water use shall be prohibited between the hours of 6-9 a.m. and 5-10 p.m.

If we should experience a Moderate Drought, all outdoor water use must be conducted with a hand-held hose with a manual on-off nozzle. The District shall recommend that non-essential public water uses (street washing, fire hydrant flushing, filling of swim-



In the worse case scenario, a Severe Drought, all the measures for Mild and Moderate Drought not only would continue to be implemented, but **all** outdoor use of water would be prohibited and a surcharge (200 percent of the applicable rate) for all water delivered over 10,000 gallons/month would be imposed on all District residents.

The Board could also prohibit water use by industrial or commercial customers that is not essential to public health and safety so that this water would be available for essential uses. During Severe Drought Conditions, the Board may use alternate water sources or delivery mechanisms that have been previously approved by the TNRCC, such as an interconnection with another water supplier, and is authorized to initiate water rationing measures.

When a Trigger Condition occurs, the District must enforce the appropriate Drought Response Measures for a minimum of five days after the last day the demand on the District's water supply facilities reaches or exceeds the limits of the Trigger Condition. After that

period, the Board may extend the measures for another five days. After ten days, and assuming no other Trigger Conditions have occurred, the Board will notify residents that the implementation and enforcement of the measures are terminated.

When the Trigger Condition is a natural or man-made emergency that results in the District's being unable to provide potable water to the residents, the Board may -- without prior notice -- invoke **all or any** of the Drought Response Measures contained in the Plan, and apply any of the penalties outlined in the Plan for violations.

There are some significant penalties for anyone who violates the terms of the Plan. Upon the first violation, the resident will receive written notice that identifies the date of the violation, the nature of the violation, the measures in effect at that time, and the penalties applicable for any further violations. If the violations reoccur, not only can monetary penalties be imposed, but the District has the right to terminate water service to a repeat offender after proper notice. Each day that a breach of any provision of the Plan continues will be considered a separate violation. Penalties of up to \$5,000.00 for each violation may be imposed.

The Board of Directors of Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25 is serious about providing a long-term supply of quality drinking water to our residents and commercial customers. This Drought Contingency Plan will help us do so even under extreme or emergency conditions. Thanks for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact us at 281-277-0129 💧

We Want to Hear From You...

Have you ever had a comment, question, or concern about your water or sewer service? Have you been curious about the construction taking place at the sewage treatment plant? Did you ever want more information about the growth within our District? Questions about your water bill? Do we have an adequate supply of water during "dry spells"? Will water and sewer service be available in case of a natural disaster?

There's a quick and easy way to find answers to all your water-related questions. Contact your Board of Directors of Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25. We place a high priority on communicating with residents served by our District, so we have a number of methods in place for reaching your Board members any time:

1. World Wide Web

Visit us on the Internet! www.waterdistrict25.com. Learn about our Board meetings, what's on the agenda, and send us your comments right from our website. Residents may contact us at another direct-mail address:

fortbend.mud25@usa.net.

2. Snail Mail:

Mail your comments or questions to our Post Office Box -- Fort Bend County Municipal Utility District No. 25, P.O. Box 2847, Sugar Land, Texas 77487-2847.



3. Monthly Meetings:

Attend a District Board meeting -- your Board of Directors holds a public meeting the second Friday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

The meetings are currently be-

ing held at the offices of Vinson & Elkins L.L.P., First City Tower, 1001 Fannin, Conference Room No. 2710, Houston, TX 77002-6760. Please verify the meeting time and location by calling George Farland or the District office to ensure that no changes in date or location have occurred due to unforeseen circumstances.

The Board of Directors and our new management team work for YOU...each and every resident of our District. Please let us know how we're doing and what we can do to improve. We look forward to hearing from you -- each of you -- soon! 💧

Drop off your payments at: (1) The Pheasant Creek Food Mart (Texaco) at Pheasant Creek Drive and Old Richmond Road (drop box only; no cash payments accepted)

OR,

(2) The District offices at 18230 Old Richmond Road, Sugar Land, Texas 77478 (no cash payments accepted).



For service requests, billing questions or after hours emergency response, call 281-277-0129.



Fort Bend County Municipal
Utility District No. 25
P.O. Box 2847
Sugar Land, Texas 77487-2847

5/2001-2300