

Protecting Your Water

by Commissioner Bruce Gardiner



We are celebrating 10 years at our current office building in Kenmore. This milestone is a good time to report to you about the improvements that have been made during the last 10 years to provide you with safe drinking water.

In 1998, the District began a major program to replace and upgrade all of our electronic systems. Y2K was coming, we were still doing many procedures by hand and we had a number of different computer programs that did not share information very well.

Today, we can report that almost all of the District's operations and informational systems are linked together. We now have the ability to access the information from anywhere in the District, whether on a laptop in the field, in our pipeline videoing truck or in any of our office departments. All of the telemetry information is delivered to the main office by radio, telephone or the Internet.

We are fortunate to have our water supply source located high within the foothills of the Cascades where water comes to us through the force of gravity without pumping. We continuously monitor and control the flow of water within our system, incorporating the latest technologies and automation that enables us to remotely or automatically re-route or isolate water in the event of earthquakes or other disruptions.

After the February 2001 earthquake, we made a comprehensive study of the District's water system, developing a plan for seismic upgrades to the water tanks, pumps, control valves and the pipes. We retrofitted our eight water tanks, either by anchoring them to the ground or

by pouring large heavy concrete donuts inside the tanks. We installed flexible connections on the tank lines, and added the remote controlled valves mentioned earlier.

2001 brought a new perspective to the meaning of security. Water systems were declared to be one of the five essential parts of the Country's infrastructure that must be maintained in the event of terrorist attacks. By the end of 2003, the District had completed its vulnerability assessment and embarked on a major program to improve the District's security. Many of the security improvements we have made also have enhanced our ability to provide service in the event of an emergency.

Some of our efforts can be seen in the accompanying pictures. These improvements have also greatly reduced vandalism the

District experiences. What can you do to help? Messing with the water supply is now a Federal offense. Some vandalism and graffiti does still occur, so if you see something that doesn't look right, or suspicious activity around our facilities, call us at 425-398-4400, or the authorities at 9-1-1. ♦



Pictures above show some of the steps that the District has taken to improve security at our reservoir sites.



*All of Us at Northshore Utility District Would Like to Wish
You and Your Family a Safe, Healthy and Happy Holiday Season!*



Plan Ahead - Winterize NOW!

Don't let winter weather catch you unprepared. Prevent the expense and inconvenience of frozen pipes by taking a few simple steps now.

Insulate Exposed Pipes and Faucets

Outdoor faucets and pipes, and pipes in unheated garages and crawl spaces are the most vulnerable in freezing weather. Hardware stores have good insulation materials available that will protect pipes from freezing.

Locate Your Main Shut-Off Valve

Don't wait for an emergency. Find your main shut-off valve now and test it! If a pipe breaks, you can stop excessive water loss and flooding by turning off your main shut-off valve. It is commonly located in the basement, garage, or outdoors by the foundation, often near the front faucet. Test the valve by turning the handle to be sure it's working properly and identify it with a tag. If a main shut-off valve does not exist, you might consider having one installed by a plumber.

Disconnect and Drain Outdoor Hoses

Detaching the hose could keep your hose bibs and pipes from freezing. Also, insulators that go over your hose bib will prevent freezing during long cold spells. They can be purchased at any hardware store.

Have a High Bill But Don't See a Leak?



Sometimes you may have a leak and not even know it. The best indication of a leak will be a high bill compared to past use or compared to how much water your neighbors may be using. There are often two reasons for mysterious water leaks: a leaking toilet or a leak between the meter and the house. A leaking toilet is more likely to be the cause. Outside leaks are relatively rare. The first step is to determine whether you actually have a leak or are just using more water than usual. Many customers are surprised at just how much water can be used for activities such as watering the lawn. If you have any more questions, our staff is available to answer any questions that you may have. Just call us at 425.398.4400. ♦

Winterize Your Vacant House

If you plan on leaving your house for several days, take some extra steps to protect pipes from freezing. Turn off the main shut-off valve and contact your gas or electric utilities to see if you should turn off the electricity or gas to the water heater. If the house is going to be vacant for an extended length of time, the water heater should also be drained. It is also a good idea to flush toilets once (to drain the tank but not the bowl), open indoor and outdoor faucets to drain pipes, and to leave your heat on at a minimum temperature setting.

If Your Pipes Do Freeze or Break

Immediately close the main shut-off valve to stop excessive flooding.

Thaw frozen pipes and faucets by wrapping them with rags and pouring hot water over the rags until the water is flowing again.

After thawing, remove the wet rags and wrap the pipes with dry insulation to prevent refreezing.

Never use an open flame or electric device to thaw a frozen pipe - this could cause a fire or electric shock. Any pipe broken during the freeze may start leaking after thawing. ♦

Adopt-a-Family

This Holiday season represents the 18th year for the District's Adopt-a-Family program. This Holiday season the commissioners and employees of the District sponsor a family in need in our area. We collect wonderful gifts and deliver them before Christmas Day. ♦



Did You Know?

- ★ That each winter our crews insulate your water meter to keep it from freezing? So don't be alarmed if you see your meter full of dirt, sawdust or wood chips as this is just one part of our winter preparedness program.
- ★ That a dripping faucet or fixture can waste 3-gallons of water a day for a total of 1,095 gallons a year.

Northshore
Utility District
Board of
Commissioners:

Trudy Rolla
President

Margaret Wiggins
Board Secretary

Don Ellis
Commissioner

Bruce Gardiner
Commissioner

Robert Peterson
Commissioner

Board of
Commissioner
Meetings
are held at the
District Office the
first and third
Monday of each
month at 6 p.m.



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