Fairfax Water

STRAIGHT FROM THE TAP

Spring 2016

Service at your fingertips

Our Online Customer Portal Is Here!

The new Online Customer Portal gives you secure, easy access to your Fairfax Water account information. Receive personalized notifications by email or text message—whichever way works best for you. You can also sign up for paperless billing, print your bill, and pay your bill online. Remember, you can still pay your bills in person or by mail.

To create an account, register at **www.FWCustomer.org** or download our app by searching "Fairfax Water" in the iTunes App Store or Google Play Store.

Our portal's dashboard shows a complete summary of your account, including billing status, water usage, and account messages. On the dashboard, you'll find:

desktop view

My Account: Manage your account. You can add or change your phone number, email address, and mailing address. You can also sign up for paperless billing.

Usage: View your water usage in gallons and dollars for the past year. You can also see rate information.

Billing: See your current bill, previous balance, account charges, and bill due date. You can also see your invoices for the past year and set up payment options.

Time for Spring Cleaning

Each spring, we clean our water mains through our spring flushing program. In this program, we open all fire hydrants to let them flow freely and we add chlorine to the system to clean the water main pipes.

Our spring flushing program has several benefits. It lets us make sure that our hydrants are working properly and it helps us identify hydrants in need of maintenance or painting.

It also helps us ensure high-quality water at all points throughout our system. The flushing helps to remove any residue in the pipes that may have built up through the year. We also use free chlorine instead of chloramines to futher disinfect the system. You can read more about chlorine at *www.fairfaxwater.org/current/free_chlorine.htm*.

This program will not affect your water service, but you may notice some changes in your water. It might taste or smell more like chlorine. Don't worry, though; this water will be safe to drink. To reduce the smell or taste of chlorine, keep a pitcher or other open container of drinking water in your refrigerator. This will allow the chlorine to dissipate. Be sure to change this water weekly.
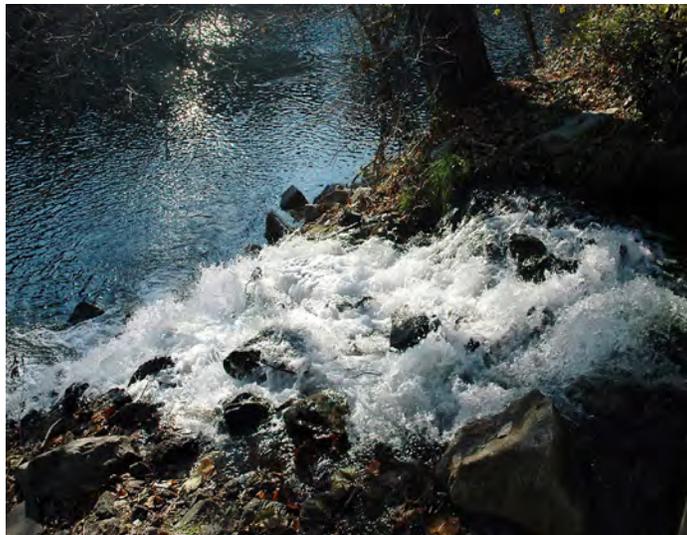
Time for Spring Cleaning (cont. from page 1)

If you have an aquarium or pond, always test the water you add to it to make sure that it does not have chlorine. Also test aquarium or pond water before adding fish, other animals, or plants that could be harmed by chlorine.

If you have questions about this program or the work being conducted in your area, call customer service at 703-698-5800, TTY 711, during business hours. After business hours, please call the after-hours line at 703-698-5613, TTY 711. ⬥

KNOW YOUR WATERSHED ADDRESS

A *watershed* is an area of land that drains into a main outlet, like an ocean, bay, or larger river. All of the rivers and streams in a watershed drain into the same outlet. We live in the Potomac Watershed, which is also known as the Potomac Basin. The Potomac Watershed drains water toward the mouth of the Potomac River—the point where the river spills into the Chesapeake Bay.

Everyone who lives in the Potomac Watershed impacts water downstream. The health of the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay depends on how we impact the watershed. A healthy watershed means good-quality water that helps aquatic plants and animals in the Chesapeake Bay thrive.

Ways You Can Help Your Watershed:

1. Learn your watershed.
Knowing which watershed you live in can help you understand when decisions are made that affect your drinking water's quality. It also helps you identify who makes these decisions. Tell others about watersheds, too. When you travel to other areas of Virginia, pay attention to signs at highway river crossings that identify watersheds.

2. Adopt a stream.
Get involved in the Adopt-a-Stream program (*www.dcr.virginia.gov/environmental-education/adopt*). Go on a stream walk to see where your local streams have problems, or organize a stream cleanup. You can also learn to watch your local stream for changes that might affect water quality.

3. Landscape your home with conservation in mind.
Use low-maintenance, native plants that help hold soil in place. Cover bare spots in your yard to prevent erosion. Use permeable paving surfaces like bricks, wood decks, or concrete lattice to let water soak into the ground.

4. Fertilize your lawn appropriately.
Did you know that most grasses should be fertilized in the fall, not the spring? Using the right amount of fertilizer at the right time of year can save you money. It can also keep harmful chemicals out of local streams.

5. Pick up pet waste.
Storm water carries pet litter waste, and other pollutants directly into waterways. Animal waste in particular may contain bacteria and viruses that can pollute water. Pick up your pet's waste to keep these harmful microorganisms out of our waterways.

6. Do not pour oil or other waste into storm drains.
One gallon of used oil can pollute 2 million gallons of water. Take used oil to a recycling center instead.

7. Get involved.
We all have a role in improving water quality. Encourage local government officials to plan with the watershed in mind. Get involved with a local watershed organization near you.

Information courtesy of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (*www.dcr.virginia.gov*). ⬥

Our Online Customer Portal Is Here! *(cont. from page 1)*

Pay Bill: Click "Pay Now" to pay your bill online. You can make a payment for free using a bank account or pay a small, cost-based fee when paying with a debit or credit card.

Outages: Using the online map, you can monitor current water main breaks. You can also report issues—like water leaks—by clicking on "Connect Me."

Notifications: Manage correspondence with Fairfax Water.

Compare Usage: Compare your current usage with your usage from the same period last year. Using the Zip Code tab, you can also compare your usage with similar homes in your ZIP code.

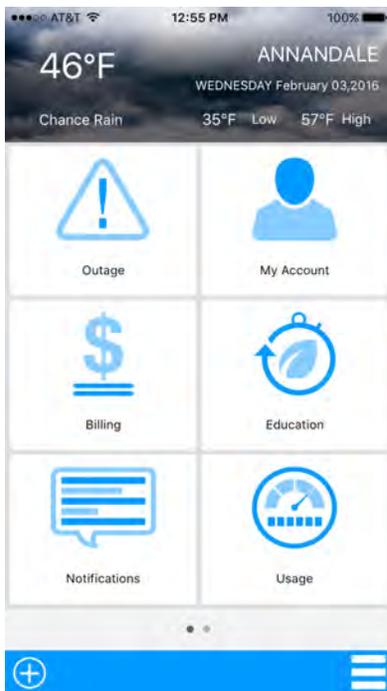**Connect Me:** Communicate with Customer Service about:
- Billing questions
- Payment information
- Account information
- Water leaks
- Water outages
- Frozen meters
- Water quality
- Our Annual Water Quality Report

Report a Service: The service module provides the ability to enter and log service requests including safety issues and tenant authorization forms.

Education: Learn more about water quality and science through websites and resources for learners of all ages.

mobile view

Glad You Asked!

Q. Who makes regulations about drinking water quality?

A. Both federal and state agencies make drinking water regulations. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) enforces the federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). You can learn more about the SDWA at *www.epa.gov/sdwa*.

The Office of Groundwater and Drinking Water, a division of USEPA, implements the SDWA. This office:

- Sets maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) for drinking water. MCLs and other requirements help ensure that drinking water is clean and safe.

- Assigns SDWA responsibilities to states. The office also makes sure that state regulations are met.

- Operates the program in states that do not enforce the program themselves

- Helps continue water quality research

- Provides technical assistance to states

The SDWA says that states must accept primary responsibility for enforcement of the state's drinking water program. Under these rules, each state must set requirements for its public water systems that meet those set by the EPA. In Virginia, the agency that sets these regulations is the Virginia Department of Health.

In addition to the SDWA, the EPA has rules for other types of water quality issues. Some of these rules are the Surface Water Treatment Rule, the Total Coliform Rule, and the Lead and Copper Rule.

Q. How is water quality tested? Who tests it?

A. We test water quality in our Water Quality Laboratory using state-of-the-art tools and methods. We also test water quality throughout the community and at different stages during the treatment process. We perform these tests to meet state and federal regulations and to ensure that we deliver clean, safe water to our customers.

We test water in many stages of the cleaning process—when it first enters our system, during the treatment process, and while it's being distributed. We continuously monitor water quality in our system for pH, turbidity, coagulation efficiency, and disinfectant levels. Some tests—such as chlorine, pH, and temperature—are performed onsite at locations throughout our system. Results for many of these tests are listed in our Annual Water Quality Report. 💧

If you have a question or concern, contact us at *pr@fairfaxwater.org* or call 703-698-5600, TTY 711.

Newsletter Feedback

If you have comments or suggestions about the newsletter, please send an email to: *pr@fairfaxwater.org*, call us at 703-289-6194, or write to us at this address:

Straight from the Tap Editor
Fairfax Water
8570 Executive Park Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22031

Important Numbers

Fairfax Water Services

Questions about water service or billing
703-698-5800

After hours/emergencies
703-698-5613

To report a water main break
703-698-5613 or email
watermainbreak@fairfaxwater.org

All other Fairfax Water departments
703-698-5600

Sewer Services

Fairfax County
Department of Public Works
Wastewater Trouble Response Center
703-323-1211
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/wastewater

City of Falls Church
Department of Public Works
703-248-5350
www.fallschurchva.gov

City of Fairfax
Department of Public Works
703-385-7810
www.fairfaxva.gov

Dig with C.A.R.E.

Miss Utility at 1-800-552-7001 or 811, *http://va811.com/homeowners/how-to-when-to*

Use TTY 711 (Virginia Relay) for all numbers unless otherwise stated.

Kids' Corner

See if you can find all the water-related words in this puzzle!

CONDENSATION
ENERGY
EVAPORATION
GAS
LIQUID
OBSERVE
PRECIPITATION
RAIN
SNOW
SOURCE
SUN

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P C U G C D B F M L I E C O U
L R A U I E L J Q B V V O H R
Y S E U Q I O C D A P G N N O
N G Q C H J L X P K K G D V R
P I R Y I D Z O F P Z D E A Q
L X V E A P R U Z A G Y N J S
U Q V V N A I S B F X F S O E
X B P J T E S T N N T E A J E
L R A I N L U E A O D C T I L
H O O B N M N U C T W R I N I
B N H H I M T T R L I U O B K
Z X V Y J J F Z T R B O N M O
N X X L U S Y I K G K S N W H
E V R E S B O I J X R T N K P
Z W K S T P K F Y F A D Z X T
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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Wednesday, Mar. 9
Environmental Science Merit Badge Program *(www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/wp-scouting.htm)*

Monday, Apr. 25
Youth Conservation Camp Application Deadline *(www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/scholarship.htm)*

Friday-Saturday, Apr. 29-30
Native Seedling Sale *(www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/seedlingsale.htm)*

Saturday, Apr. 30
National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day *(http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback)*

May (dates and times vary)
Farmer's Markets Reopen *(www.cleanfairfax.org/programs-events/farmers-markets)*

Monday, May 30
Fairfax Water Offices Closed for Memorial Day

Friday-Sunday, Jun. 10-12
Celebrate Fairfax *(www.celebrate-fairfax.com)*

Sunday, Jun. 12
Sustainable Garden Tour *(www.fairfaxcounty.gov/nvswcd/garden-tour.htm)*

Fairfax Water

Fairfax Water is a public, non-profit water authority serving nearly two million people in the Northern Virginia communities of Fairfax County, Loudoun, Prince William, Fort Belvoir, Herndon, Dulles, Vienna, Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax City.

WATER USE IT WISELY

Water-Saving Tip

Direct downspouts and other runoff toward shrubs and trees. Or collect runoff to water your garden. For more tips on saving water, visit *www.mwcog.org/environment/water/watersupply/wisewater.asp.*