

Around the Lake

Water and Sewer-Related News and Information

How to Keep Your Irrigation System from Contaminating The Public Water System



by Commissioner
John Warner

An irrigation system makes watering easier, saves time, and can be designed to be

water efficient. But when water contaminated by weed killers, fertilizers, and animal waste flows back into your drinking water through the connection point, irrigation systems can become a public hazard.

Silver Lake Water & Sewer District is responsible for providing safe drinking water to all our customers, which includes monitoring backflow protection on known health hazards to meet State Law (WAC 246-290-490).

Households, businesses and schools with irrigation systems must protect drinking water from possible back flow contamination by using one of the following three methods:

1. Installing an approved backflow prevention assembly device;
2. Installing an atmospheric vacuum breaker;
3. Establishing physical separation.



1. Backflow Prevention Device

The most common backflow prevention device for an irrigation system is called a “Double Check Valve Assembly (DCVA). Along with Pressure Vacuum Breaker Assemblies (PVBA) and Reduced Pressure Backflow Assemblies (RPBA), these devices require initial and annual testing by a state certified Backflow Assembly Tester.



2. Atmosphere Vacuum Breaker

The Atmosphere Vacuum Breaker (AVB) must be installed 6 inches above the highest point in the system. It does not require annual testing, however the District requires an initial inspection to ensure proper installation.

3. Physical Separation

To eliminate the hazard and remove the need for backflow protection, establishing a physical separation between the public water supply and the known hazard is not a practical solution for irrigation.



Finding Irrigation System Leaks

Irrigation leaks are especially difficult to locate, as they typically occur while the system is operating on a timer. Here are ways to check if you have an irrigation leak:

1. **Monitor water usage.** If your irrigation consumption is higher than the previous year's usage, you may have a leak.
2. **Conduct visual inspections.** Regularly check your system for visible signs of leaks. Look for puddles, wet spots, unusually damp areas, or areas with lush or greener growth compared to the surrounding areas. These may indicate a leak in the underground pipes or sprinkler heads.
3. **Look for changes in water pressure.** Abnormal water pressure can be a sign of an irrigation leak. Install a pressure gauge to measure the water pressure in your system while it is running.
4. **Check your meter.** Check the low flow/leak indicator on your meter when the system is charged with water but not running. If the indicator is moving, you may have a leak in the underground piping or valve that is not closing fully. The leak indicator looks like a triangle, snowflake, or small dial with a sweep hand, and indicates when water is moving through the meter.
5. **Get help.** Consider hiring a professional irrigation specialist if you have a complex irrigation system or persistent leaks. Their experience can help identify the most elusive leaks and provide recommendations for repairs.

Questions or concerns? Email our Water Quality Department at backflowtests@slwsd.com or call us at (425) 659-2304.

Project Update:

10th Drive SE Water and Sewer Improvements

The District opened bids on March 6, 2024, for the construction of planned water and sewer improvements on 10th Drive SE between 118th Place SE and 131st Street SE. The low bidder was Shoreline Construction Company out of Woodinville, who has done extensive similar work in the area and for the District. The low bid was \$4,369,111, which was almost \$900,000 under the engineer’s estimated cost.



As a brief project background, the District will be replacing and upsizing approximately 5,100 feet of old cast iron water main to provide a new distribution backbone for future redevelopment in the Silver Acres area. In addition, approximately 2,300 feet of new sewer main will be installed where feasible and cost-effective. The District does not expect or require all current property owners to connect to the sewer in the near term. This is a forward-thinking project that will address anticipated growth over the coming decades.

Construction will begin in late spring and take seven to nine months to complete. Additional outreach and notification will be done with the local residents impacted by construction, and information is available on the project website: www.10thdrivewaterandsewer.com

Two More Steps Towards Sustainability



Two new electric-powered trucks have hit the road with the District’s Operations and Maintenance Crew

In our ongoing efforts toward achieving ever more sustainable operations, the District ordered two Ford F-150 Lightning (Battery Electric Vehicle) trucks back in 2022. They finally arrived in December 2023 and February 2024, and are now on the road with the District’s Operations and Maintenance Crews.

These new trucks are very similar in form and function to many of our existing gas-powered trucks, and their purchase cost was about the same as a comparably equipped gas-powered truck—after factoring in a new federal rebate that allows the District to claim a tax credit. Their battery range is not a limiting factor for use; after being used extensively each workday, they are parked overnight and recharged onsite.



Operationally these trucks will offer long-term savings with lower fuel/energy costs as well as lower maintenance costs. In their first few months of service, the vehicles are averaging two miles per kWh, which translates into roughly five cents per mile in energy cost.

KITCHEN F.O.G. CREATES EXPENSIVE CLOGS



FATS OILS GREASE



**F.O.G.
CLOGS PIPES!**

AVOID EXPENSIVE REPAIRS

1. Never pour fats, oils, and grease down your sink drain, toilet, or garbage disposal unit.
2. Pour excess fat, oil, and grease into an empty take-out coffee cup or soup can, refrigerate or freeze until solid, and dispose of it in your garbage can. Or put the pan into your freezer to harden the FOG, then scrape it directly into the garbage.
3. When doing dishes, wipe away excess grease from pots, pans, and utensils with paper towels first, then toss those into your garbage can.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: "Doesn't dish soap keep grease from clogging pipes?"

A: Dish soap emulsifies grease enough to remove it from your pans, but it does not break it down enough to move it completely through pipes.

Q: "Won't plenty of hot water flush it through the system?"

A: Eventually all fats, oils and grease wind up somewhere. There's no such thing as getting it entirely through the system.



**Pictures Are Worth
1,000 Words**

*The following items are
NOT FLUSHABLE:*

- Disinfectant wipes
- Baby wipes
- Make-up wipes
- Toilet bowl wipes
- Dental Floss
- Kleenex
- Paper towels
- Feminine hygiene products

Even though some wipes are labeled "flushable," the above photo proves the opposite: disposable wipes are the #1 cause of a clogged sewer line. They not only damage property, but can hurt the environment and make people sick. Remember, the cost of repairing a clogged sewer line is a homeowner's responsibility—use a trash can to dispose of anything that isn't toilet paper!



15205 - 41st Avenue SE
Bothell, WA 98012-6114

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit# 1327
Seattle, WA

**REMINDER:
No Service Disconnections
During Extreme Heat Events**

Starting last summer, the District no longer disconnects service due to non-payment on days the National Weather Service (NOAA) has issued a heat-related alert for the District’s service area. Customers who were previously disconnected may request reconnection for the duration of the alert by calling us at (425) 337-3647 or visiting our office during business hours.

Silver Lake Water & Sewer District

Address

15205 - 41st Avenue SE
Bothell, WA 98012-6114

Phone Fax

(425) 337-3647 (425) 337-4399

Email

service@slwsd.com

Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Closed Saturday, Sunday, and major holidays.

Public Meetings

Our Board of Commissioners meet in-person, on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, beginning at 5:30 p.m. The public may attend and comment in person or via teleconference. The conference telephone number and access code are published on our website. There is an opportunity for public comment at the beginning of the agenda. If you wish to speak at a meeting, please contact us in advance at (425) 337-3647 (Ext. 212) so we can call upon you at the appropriate time.

How to Pay Your Bill

Types of Payments Accepted

Check, money order, and credit card (Visa, MasterCard, American Express)

Pay By DropBox

A payment drop box—for checks and money orders only—is available in the parking lot of our office at 15205 - 41st Avenue SE in Bothell.

Pay Online

www.slwsd.com

Pay By Phone

1-(844) 956-1375

Pay With Your Own Bank Bill Pay System

Please allow 7 business days for delivery

Pay In Person

15205 - 41st Avenue SE
Bothell, WA 98012-6114

Transaction Fees as of May 8, 2023

Pay online with credit/debit \$4.25
Pay online with ACH/EFT \$2.85
Pay by phone with credit/debit card: \$5.00
Pay by phone with EFT: \$3.60

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**In Case of
Emergency**

District staff are on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to assist you with water and sewer emergencies.

(425) 337-3647

If you are calling after hours, press “1” to hold for an Emergency Operator.