

# Around the Lake

Water and Sewer-Related News and Information



## Lead Service Line Inventory

by Commissioner Anne Backstrom

**Driven by the Flint, Michigan water crisis, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently issued regulations requiring all public water suppliers including the District to develop a lead service line inventory.**

This comprehensive inventory requires the District to identify the service line material between the water main in the street and customers' homes for nearly 19,000 service lines in the District.

Lead in drinking water is largely attributable to lead pipes, plumbing fixtures which contain lead, and solder/flux containing lead (used to join pipes). If the water is corrosive (has a low pH value), lead can be leached into the drinking water.

This was what happened in Flint, Michigan: to cut costs, City and State officials directed the use of a new source of water that was more corrosive. Because many of the homes in Flint were built at a time when lead pipes and lead solder/flux were commonly used, the more corrosive water quickly caused a very large problem.

The actions that led to the Flint crisis violated pre-existing standards and could have been easily prevented.

**Thankfully, Western Washington—including the District's service area—was largely developed after the period when lead pipes were commonly used, thus we do not anticipate finding any lead service lines within the District.**

Last August, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published new Lead Service Line Inventory guidelines requiring all water service providers in the nation to conduct an inventory of water line materials, with results due back to the EPA by October 16, 2024. Washington State Department of Health is developing their own guidance to supplement the federal guidelines, and will monitor compliance state-wide.

District staff began our inventory effort by assembling and reviewing existing documentation to identify which of our water service lines have no documentation, and will require a different type of inspection—amounting to roughly 25% of our nearly 19,000 water connections.

Using that subset, we are currently identifying a statistically accurate sample set of these unknown service lines in order to conduct a physical water service line inspection—representing approximately 400 homes constructed before 1987 (a nationwide ban took effect in 1986 on the use of waterline materials containing a high lead content).



**If you are one of the 400 homes identified for physical inspection, here's what to expect:**

You'll receive a letter of notification including an approximate schedule; followed by a "door hanger" notice a few days prior to the actual event.

On the day of inspection, District staff will hydro-excavate a small pit on one or both sides of your water meter to identify the water line's material.

While there, we'll upgrade the meter to our new standard, and replace any meter boxes in poor condition.

The excavation pit will be backfilled to its prior surface elevation, and either seeded with grass, or finished with landscape bark or crushed rock to match the surroundings.

You will only be out of service for a short time during meter replacement.

Should we discover any lead lines, you will be directly notified, however this is not anticipated. Results of our final inventory will be available to all customers on a website map.

**Should you have any questions, feel free to call us at (425) 337-3647.**

# 2023 Utility Rate Increase

Our Winter newsletter provided the details about utility rate increases that are “passed through” to us from outside agencies—those from whom the District purchases water or receives sewer treatment services. This spring, our Board of Commissioners has identified the District’s inflationary rate increases.

As detailed in our Winter 2022 newsletter, Silver Lake Water and Sewer District utility rates are comprised of two components: “pass through” increases, and District increases due to impacts of inflation on our operations.

“Pass through” rates are adjusted annually by the outside agency, as per our agreements with these agencies, and take effect either at the start of the year, or in April, depending on the agency. Since “pass through” rates represent the District’s largest expenditure, as well as a significant cost to our customers, our Board

of Commissioners reviews the cumulative impact closely, and from time to time elicits a correction from the agency using a dispute resolution process.

The other component in rate adjustment is the impact of inflation on our operations. High inflationary costs continue to affect the District’s cost of supplies, materials, energy, employee wages, and capital construction costs. For a consistent reference point, the District tracks the Consumer Price Index in October of each year as an indicator of the increased cost to provide service. In October 2022,

the annual CPI increase was 9.2%. However in the hope that inflation is beginning to ease, our Board of Commissioners is only adjusting the District’s rates by 4.71%—half the rate of true inflation.

The Tables below outline the final 2023 Water and Sewer Rate Adjustment for single family customers for each sewer basin, effective May 1, 2023.

- **Customers billed in even months:**  
The rate increase took effect on the June bill, for services provided from May 1 through June 30.
- **Customers billed in odd months:**  
The rate increase will take effect on the July bill, for services provided from June 1 to July 31.
- **For commercial, industrial, irrigation, and multifamily customers billed monthly:**  
The rate increase took effect on the May bill, for services provided from May 1–31.

## 2023 Final Water & Sewer Utility Rates Everett Sewer Basin (5/8” Residential Water Meter)

Description	Water Rate			Sewer Rate
	Base	Winter Unit	Summer Unit	
2023 Current Rate	\$15.50	3.20	3.80	\$70.95
2023 Pass-Through Rates	–	–	–	2.80
2023 District Inflation 4.71%	0.75	0.15	0.20	3.35
2023 New Rates	\$16.25	3.35	4.00	\$77.10
2023 Net Increase	0.75	0.15	0.20	6.15
2023 Percentage Increase	4.84%	4.69%	5.26%	8.67%

## 2023 Final Water & Sewer Utility Rates AWWD Sewer Basin (5/8” Residential Water Meter)

Description	Water Rate			Sewer Rate
	Base	Winter Unit	Summer Unit	
2023 Current Rate	\$15.50	3.20	3.80	\$68.50
2023 Pass-Through Rates	–	–	–	3.15
2023 District Inflation 4.71%	0.75	0.15	0.20	3.20
2023 New Rates	\$16.25	3.35	4.00	\$74.85
2023 Net Increase	0.75	0.15	0.20	6.35
2023 Percentage Increase	4.84%	4.69%	5.26%	9.27%

## Low-Income Senior/Disabled Rate Program

The District offers reduced rates to low-income seniors and disabled persons with a gross household income of \$55,743. Call us at (425) 337-3647 or visit our website to learn more, where you can also download the application, at:

[www.slwsd.com/customer-assistance-programs](http://www.slwsd.com/customer-assistance-programs)

The annual cost of the Low Income Senior/Disabled Person Program is estimated at \$71,826.00.

Visit [www.slwsd.com](http://www.slwsd.com) for a more detailed Water and Sewer Rate Table and a comparison of 2023 Water and Sewer Rates for other local agencies.

# How We Maximize Life Cycle And Minimize Cost When Rehabilitating and Maintaining Your Sewer Infrastructure

The District has approximately 17,600 sewer connections, 5,250 manholes, and 185 miles of sewer pipe. Of that amount, approximately 22 miles are older concrete pipes that are subject to interior corrosion and deterioration from sewer gas (hydrogen sulfide) and erosion.

In 2020 and 2022, the District completed a Closed Camera Television (CCTV) inspection of all concrete pipes using a robotic camera to assess pipe condition.

## Installing New Pipe Inside the Old Pipe

When a sewer pipe has not failed structurally, we can install a special liner on the inside of the old pipe, made of epoxy coated fiberglass (or similar material). This method, called Cast-In-Place Pipe (CIPP) lining, essentially creates a brand new sewer pipe.

In 2022, the District used CIPP to line approximately 3,950 feet of concrete sewer pipe, with another 21,600 feet in the northern portion of the District slated to be completed this year. This work will rehabilitate roughly one-third of the pipe inspected in 2020, for a total cost of approximately \$2.78 million—a fraction of what it would cost the District to dig up and replace the same sewer pipes. More CIPP sewer pipe lining is planned in 2025.

Even better, this CIPP work is a multi-agency project led by Alderwood Water & Wastewater District, which not only reduces the risk of using a relatively new rehabilitation method, it also decreases costs by aggregating material orders to obtain discounts.

## Routine Sewer Pipe Clean-Out

In addition to concrete sewer pipe rehabilitation, the District cleans our entire system of sewer pipes as part of a regular maintenance program, no less than once every five years. Some areas require more frequent maintenance, such as those with flatter slopes or grease accumulation. For these, we use a high pressure jetting hose from one manhole to another, and remove the accumulated residue with a Vactor truck.



*Using a CCTV robotic camera to inspect sewer pipes*

*Sewer line clogged by fats, oils, and grease (often exacerbated by [non]-"flushable" wipes)*



*Vactor truck in action*

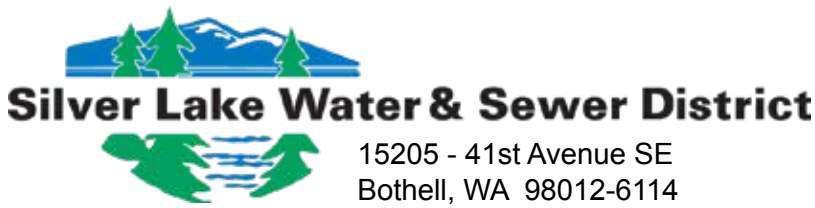
## Reducing the Risk of Blowbacks

Occasionally during routine sewer line cleaning, a “blowback” can occur—when the force of the high pressure jet escapes past the sewer line “tee” connection and enters the side sewer (the portion of sewer line owned by customers). There are many reasons this might happen, but typically it is due to inadequate plumbing or plugged home venting.



*Sewer Backwater Valve*

**Customer Prevention Tip:** installing a backwater valve in your side sewer line can help reduce or eliminate the risk of a blowback event. Contact us for more info at (425) 337-3647.



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

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### NOTICE:

#### No Service Disconnections During Extreme Heat Events

Effective July 23, 2023, the District will no longer disconnect 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.