

Around the Lake

Water and Sewer-Related News and Information



Preventing Water Loss and Unforeseen Service Outages with our Proactive Leak Detection Program

by Commissioner Shauna Willner

With approximately 18,700 water service connections and 206 miles of water pipe, keeping your water system performing optimally requires regular maintenance and routine inspections, including our proactive Leak Detection Program.

This Program monitors water pipes all throughout the year to identify possible leaks, with results provided in an Annual Leakage Report to the Washington State’s Department of Health (DOH) as part of their regulatory requirements.



Historically we’ve maintained a relatively low leakage rate of less than 5%—half of the DOH’s minimum Water Use Efficiency Requirements of 10%—due in no small part to the relatively young age of our water system.

However there are a number of older (50+ years) cast iron pipes in the District’s service area that are brittle and subject to breaks and leaks—particularly when weather conditions change and cause soils to shift underground.



This is Where our Proactive Leak Detection Program Comes In

The District’s goal is to check 30 miles of pipe every year, typically conducted overnight, when customer water use is low. We place special acoustic microphones at each end of a pipe run, which are finely tuned to detect the sound of running water.

If an irregular sound or anomaly is detected, we alert District Crews, who schedule an excavation to pinpoint the leak and make a repair.

Detecting Leaks at Home Is Equally Important



When you change the batteries in your smoke alarm, that’s also a good time to check your home for leaks:

- Toilets are the #1 cause of leaks (and resulting high water bills). If your toilet occasionally refills on its own, or if you have to jiggle the handle to get it to stop running, it probably has a leak.
- A leaky faucet or shower head that drips once every 2 seconds can waste 1,000 gallons per year.
- Underground leaks are usually harder to detect: look for soggy patches of ground, an isolated area of green grass, or water in odd locations outside.

In 2022, the District began switching to new “Badger Meters” that enable us to read meters remotely, and also enable customers to monitor water usage with an “Eye On Water” App—yet another great way to spot leaks.

Ready to fix those leaks? Find all the information you need on the Saving Water Partnership website...

www.savingwater.org/indoors/fixing-leaks/

... or give us a call at (425) 337-3647.

Special Rates for Low Income Senior or Disabled Persons

Silver Lake Water and Sewer District provides discounted water and sewer rates for qualifying low-income Seniors or Disabled persons, applied to the base rate for both water and sewer service.

The rate reduction is approximately 50% for water, and 25% for sewer base rates. To qualify, the current income cap is \$55,743 for a household; however, we expect that income cap to be raised to \$75,000 for 2024, to reflect increases in the cost of living.

Seniors are defined as a person 62 years of age or older. Disabled individuals also qualify, if they receive disabled benefits from one or more of the following:

- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
- Veteran Disability Compensation (VDC)
- Non-Grant Medical Assistance (NGMA)
- Permanent disability insurance benefits, or state permanent disability benefits.

More information and the Application Form can be found at the District's webpage at www.slwsd.com, under the forms section, or by contacting a Customer Service representative at (425) 337-3647.

In 2023, 248 customers qualified for low-income rates and received a total of \$77,064 benefits in the form of a reduced base rate for water and sewer services.

Cost of Low Income Senior/Disabled Rate Program

Low Income Senior or Disabled Customers	# of Customers	2023 Low Income	2023 Regular	Annual Cost
Water	248	8.15	16.25	\$ 24,105.60
Water - Everett Basin	204	57.85	77.10	47,124.00
Sewer - AWWD Basin	26	56.15	74.85	5,834.40
Total Cost				\$ 77,064.00

How to Thaw a Frozen Pipe

Wrap frozen pipes with rags soaked with hot water, changing out the rags as they cool down. You can also use a hair dryer, space heater, or heating tape—just be sure to keep electrical devices from contacting water. Once the pipe is thawed, wrap it with dry insulation. The use of a torch is NEVER recommended due to the chance of a fire. You can also contact a plumber for assistance.

Plumbing Maintenance Now Prevents Cold Weather Issues Later

Prevent the expense and inconvenience of frozen pipes by taking simple steps now. Always insulate any exposed pipes and faucets and pay extra attention to areas where the water service line enters the home, such as in a garage or crawl space. Disconnect garden hoses from any outside faucets. Also, you should place a protective insulated cover over any outdoor faucets to prevent them from freezing.

Ensure everyone in your household knows the location of your shutoff valve before there is a burst pipe and how to turn it off. The valve is typically located where the water service line enters your home (often in the garage or crawl space). If your shutoff valve is not accessible or operable, the next best place to shut off the water is in the meter box. We recommend you own a shutoff wrench, which are available at most hardware stores for about \$15. There is a quarter turn shutoff valve located in the meter box approximately three inches before the meter. Remove the lid to access the meter and shutoff valve, turn the shutoff valve one quarter turn (90 degrees) clockwise to shut off the meter, and counterclockwise the same quarter turn to restore water service. If the shutoff valve is buried in dirt (due to moles), use a garden trowel to uncover it.

In prolonged cold periods, water meters have been known to freeze. Most are built with a "frost plate" that gives way if the water inside the meter freezes. If you believe the meter is frozen, please contact us. However, between the meter and the house, you are responsible for protecting your water pipes from freezing. The District maintains the water supply system from the source to the water meter; we do not maintain water lines beyond the water meter on private property. If called out, our crews will only shut off the meter itself.

If you need our assistance, contact us at (425) 337-3647. Our response time may vary, and there may be a charge if an employee is dispatched to your home to turn off the water. For these reasons, please locate your shut-off valve in advance.



Drilling for dewatering well (white pipe) installation



Drilling to install columns of sand and pea gravel around perimeter of wet well



Wet well caisson being installed



Mini excavator working inside the new wet well



24 inch C900 connector pipe being installed between old and new wet wells



Valve vault being set next to the new wet well

Improving Your Sewer and Water Infrastructure

Pioneer Trails Lift Station Replacement *Pictured above*

A lift station is a pumping facility that moves wastewater from lower to higher elevations, and is integral to moving sewage to a wastewater treatment plant efficiently and cost-effectively in a gravity pipeline system.

Built in 1987, our Pioneer Trails Lift Station needed to be replaced and augmented for increased capacity. Since it operates 24/7 and cannot be taken out of service, we needed to build the new facility immediately adjacent to the old one, so we can switch flow over once the new station is operational. The new facility will feature three submersible pumps, a new backup generator, and an electrical control building, along with rehabilitation and conversion of the existing wet well into overflow storage.

Faber Construction Corp. from Lynden, Washington began work in August 2023 by drilling in dewatering pipes to lower the surrounding groundwater table. A new 40-foot deep, 12-foot diameter wet well was installed in early October, followed by the placement of two large underground utility vaults. Piping installation is underway, and will be followed by the construction of the new electrical building and generator canopy. They will then demolish the old lift station, and restore the site.

The total projected cost of the project including design, permitting, construction, and contingency is \$5.4 million, and is estimated to be complete in late 2024 or early 2025, depending on material supply chain issues.

New Sewer and Water Mains in the Silver Acres Neighborhood

The Silver Acres neighborhood has some of the oldest water infrastructure in the District, with some water mains dating back to the 1950s. In anticipation of increased development with the arrival of light rail, the District will be replacing an old cast iron main on 10th Drive SE with an upsized ductile main, and installing a new sewer main along portions of the route where it is cost effective to do so. Combining these efforts reduces disruption to residents and is more cost effective than separate projects to replace water mains and extend sewers. This combined project will provide adequate fire flow, increased reliability, and extended sewer service to support development for years to come. The effort is being partially funded with a \$2,000,000 low interest loan from the State Public Works Assistance Account. The cost of the sewer main will initially be borne by the District, property owners will only be responsible for their proportional share if and when they connect to sewer. This takes the burden off a single developer or homeowner, and homeowners won't incur costs unless and until they connect to the new sewer, versus requiring all residents to pay for an improvement up front, whether or not they use it. The District does not expect all current property owners to connect to the sewer in the near term. If you sell your home, the new owners would not be required to connect to sewer. However, if you or the new owners choose to redevelop the property in any way, or if the septic system fails, you may be required to connect to sewer as part of Snohomish County's building or septic permit process.

[Learn more at www.10thDriveWaterandSewer.com](http://www.10thDriveWaterandSewer.com)



Our Solar Retrofit is Complete!

In 2022, the District received funds from the Washington State Department of Commerce’s Solar Retrofit Grant, followed by an additional rebate from new Federal Government legislation, both of which we applied towards the installation of new solar panels at our Headquarters building. Installation was just completed in November. We’re anticipating over 140,000 kWh annual production, which will offset 1/3 of our Headquarters’ energy needs, and reduce our electricity bill by \$13,000 annually!

Silver Lake Water & Sewer District

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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.