

Here Comes The Sun...

It's been a long winter, and we are all looking forward to the arrival of spring. In the fall, we prepare for winter storms and outages, so as we transition from winter to spring, here are some tips to prepare you for the upcoming and long-awaited spring weather.

Prepare Your Sprinklers

To conserve water, make sure your sprinkler heads are in working order and directed on your lawn and not on sidewalks and streets. It's also important to monitor your system throughout the season to make sure individual



sprinkler heads do not become clogged with obstructions like dirt, grass clippings or other debris. Should a sprinkler head be jammed with this material, it can cause an unnecessary buildup in water pressure that can burst the system's water main. Test your system as early as you can and monitor it throughout the season to make

sure all heads are running as they are supposed to. It's also a good idea to check each head to make sure they haven't been damaged — perhaps as a result of a careless pass with the lawnmower. A damaged head does more than simply fail to water the area it is assigned; it can also be a water waster, as fluid is still assigned to the head by the system but isn't being dispensed as it should be. If you do find a damaged sprinkler head, have it replaced immediately.

Call Before You Dig

Spring also means home projects like planting new shrubs, erecting new structures, and landscaping projects. When planting trees or shrubs, always call 8-1-1 at least two business days before you dig! This is a free service and all utilities will be located and marked in your yard. We ask that you keep shrubs trimmed that are near meter boxes so our meter readers have access to read the dials on the meter.

Keep an Eye on Your Bill

Spring can mean increased water usage for things like watering your lawns, filling up pools, garden irrigation and letting the kids use the water slide. Don't let your water bill surprise you. If you have any questions about your bill, please contact our Customer Service Team at (866) 357-8783 or by email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.

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Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman





District 2

Russell E. Olsen

District 3

Chris Stearns

Important Messages

-  PUD offices remain closed until further notice.
-  Read more about important reminders for customers on Page 2.
-  What does our Customer Service Team do? Page 3 contains some information about our team that may interest you.
-  Do you qualify for Project Help? Review Page 4 for more information on this important Customer Support Program.

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Look Out for Leaky Toilets

Depending on the location, a leaky toilet can add a lot of money to your monthly bill over time or cause serious damage to your floors. For starters, feel the floor around the toilet. If it's wet, that could be a sign of a failed joint or broken seal. Whatever it is, it should be fixed before the ongoing wetness causes damage to the floor or the ceiling below. Then, lift the lid of your tank and put in three to four drops of food coloring. Wait 30 minutes and check the bowl. If the coloring has made its way into your bowl, you may have a leak.

Form a Neighborhood Watering Schedule

The pandemic has kept all of us apart. As things start to open up and vaccinations are being distributed, consider talking with neighbors and forming a neighborhood water schedule. By alternating water times, your water system can recharge and water pressure will be less impacted. Try to avoid peak water usage times during the day and take your shower a little earlier or later than you normally would. You can also take a quick look around your neighborhood to see when most of your neighbors run their sprinklers and set yours to start a little later, preserving your water pressure. Some PUD customers use voluntary alternating water schedules with the people around their neighborhoods.

Pool Time

Filling your pool over time instead of all at once can spread the cost over a couple water bills. Covering and uncovering your family pool may be a bit of work and even a bit challenging, but when you keep the water from evaporating, you reduce the amount of water needed to keep it fully functional and ready for those long hot months of swimming and summer fun.

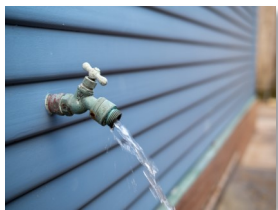


Talking 'bout the Car Wash, Yeah!

If you are used to washing your vehicle at home with your garden hose, then surely you know the extent of the water you are using. Believe it or not, but car washes nowadays use only 40 gallons of water, which, as you can imagine, is much less than the gallons you would use at home in the driveway.

We hope these tips can help you save some money on your water bills this spring and summer. Because conservation is very important to our organization, during spring and summer newsletters, we share conservation tips and each year we have new conservation goals that we aim to meet with your help.

Ask a PUD Employee



In anticipation of better weather, the Planning & Compliance and Field Operations teams are hard at work with planning and routine maintenance of the PUD's water systems. One question we frequently receive is: "If there was a water outage at my water system, and the problem is fixed, why do I have to wait to use my water?" Here to answer that question is Kim Gubbe, our Director of Planning & Compliance, who recently celebrated 16 years here at the PUD.

Water outages are caused by many different events like a mainline break or leak, equipment failure, overuse or peak-day demands. These outages can cause the reservoir to drain or the pumping system to fail, and it's important that we allow the water system to recover.

We ask customers to wait at least 20 minutes before attempting to use water to allow the water system to recover. When water is restored, the sudden flow scours the mineral buildup through the pipes. We highly recommend flushing from an outdoor hose bib or bathroom tub faucet for up to ten minutes or until the water is clear. If the water does not clear up after 10 minutes, please give us a call at (866) 357-8783.

What's Happening at the PUD?

This month, we'd like to put a spotlight on the PUD's Customer Service Team. While our offices are currently closed to the public, our Customer Service Team is still hard at work to assist customers. So what exactly does this team do? Read below to learn more about this important part of the PUD.

What specific functions does the Customer Service Team cover?

The Customer Service Team covers many specific duties and processes within the PUD. Below is a list of some of the most important tasks carried out by our Customer Service Representatives:

- Meter reading uploads and audits
- Generating service requests related to water quality issues, maintenance requests, and other areas
- Monthly billing
- Customer account management
- Processing customer payments
- Past due accounts process
- Customer correspondence
- Customer Support Program implementation



A Customer Service Representative works from her desk. *Taken in 2018.*

How many people are employed within Customer Service?

Currently, the Customer Service Team is comprised of four employees, three Customer Service Representatives and one Customer Service Supervisor. Two of these employees are working remotely at this time to practice social distancing in accordance with COVID-19 restrictions.

What is the Customer Service Team working on now?

Most Customer Service duties are recurring, which means that tasks like monthly billing and the past due accounts process are processed each month like clockwork. They also greatly contribute to special projects like water system acquisition, public hearings and meetings, and technology upgrades/improvements. Without the hard work of the Customer Service Team, the PUD wouldn't be what it is today!

Important Reminders

Just a few important reminders for our customers:

- **Save a stamp and save some time by signing up for our Auto Pay automatic payment service!** There are no fees to sign up for this service. Visit our website and click on the "Pay Bill Online" link at the top of the webpage to get started.
- **Keep your contact information up-to-date with our office.** We ask that you keep your contact information current with our office in case we need to reach you about emergencies, routine maintenance, and changes in your account's status.
- **We are still practicing social distancing.** Unfortunately, our administrative office is currently closed to the public. If you need to contact us, please call or email our office.
- **Help our meter readers by keeping your water meter box clear.** Keeping your meter box free from landscaping and debris helps meter readers effectively collect meter reads during their time-sensitive meter reading schedule.
- **Keep an eye on your bill.** Months with higher temperatures result in higher bills. For information on water conservation, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/water-systems.htm.

Our normal business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. If you experience a water emergency, please call us at (866) 357-8783 to connect with us. We have technicians on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

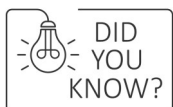
Simple Ways to Recognize a PUD Employee

Scams are everywhere. While some scammers can hide behind a phone call or a fake website, others can show up right at your doorstep. Here are some tips for recognizing a PUD employee:



- Some uniforms may vary, but field technicians will have some article of clothing with the PUD logo.
- All PUD field technicians carry a PUD-issued identification card.
- All PUD field technicians are assigned vehicles that are clearly marked with the PUD logo.

If you're unsure, feel free to ask any PUD employee for their identification. Look for PUD clothing and a vehicle that is clearly marked with the Thurston PUD logo. Call us at (866) 357-8783 to verify the identity of a PUD employee.



The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) received more than 31,000 reports of utility-related identity theft in 2019. Please call our Customer Service Team at (866) 357-8783 to report any suspicious activity related to your water account or your water utility service.

Project Help - Customer Support Program

Do you qualify as income-eligible and need assistance with paying your water bill? Have you and your family been affected financially by the COVID-19 pandemic? You may qualify to receive a credit towards your utility bill through our Project Help Program. For other available resources, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/customer-support.htm.

To be eligible for assistance you must: (1) be a customer with the PUD, with an active account in your name, (2) have received a past due notice for your water service, and (3) provide documentation that household income is \$40,000 or less **or** have been financially impacted by COVID-19 and can provide documentation of your employment status. If you are a customer in need, we encourage you to reapply yearly. Contact our Customer Service Team with any questions or concerns about the program's requirements.

To apply, visit our website at www.ThurstonPUD.org to complete the Project Help application (found on the front page of our website). If you'd like to request a paper copy of the application, please call us at (866) 357-8783 to speak with our Customer Service Team.

If you're interested in making a one-time or monthly donation, please call us at (866) 357-8783, email PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org, or return the form below with any payments mailed to our office at Thurston PUD, 1230 Ruddell Road SE, Lacey, WA 98503.

I authorize Thurston PUD to bill my account \$ _____.

- One-time only
- Each month

This authorization shall remain in effect until the PUD receives written notification from me to terminate this agreement. I understand that if my account becomes past due, this authorization becomes invalid.

Name: _____ Account No.: _____

Service Address: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____