

Leadership Message

Backflow Prevention Devices & Annual Testing

By: Kim Gubbe, Director of Planning and Compliance

What is a backflow event?

A backflow event occurs when water or unwanted liquid substances flow in a reverse direction into the distribution pipes of a potable water supply (your local water system). Negative pressure in the supply piping causes used, contaminated, or polluted water to flow backward through a plumbing fixture or irrigation system and can be a serious health risk by contaminating the drinking water supply.

How are backflow events prevented?

There are numerous backflow prevention devices on the market to avoid these events from occurring. If you have an irrigation system, swimming pool, hot tub, private well, or any animal-watering infrastructure at your property, you are required to have a backflow prevention device installed. Common assembly types include double check valve assembly (DCVA), reduced pressure backflow assembly (RPBA), and a simple physical air gap. You can also install atmospheric vacuum breakers (AVB) on all outside faucets. You can get AVBs at any hardware store for a cost around \$5 each.



Above: Example of an atmospheric vacuum breaker (AVB)

Why do I have to test my backflow device each year?

Annual testing ensures that devices are functioning properly, and no parts or pieces are missing or broken. If you have a DCVA or RPBA backflow prevention device at your property, the state of Washington requires that your assembly is tested annually by a state certified backflow tester. Thurston PUD monitors and tracks annual testing of our customers' backflow prevention assemblies and sends out reminder letters as needed.

How can I help keep my community's water safe?

If you're not sure if you need a backflow device at your property, please fill out a Cross-Connection Control Questionnaire at www.thurstonpud.org/links-and-forms.htm and submit it to our Customer Service Team via email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org. We are also happy to mail a form to you by request.

If a device is required, you will be required to have a backflow prevention device installed and tested annually in order to keep your drinking water safe. A list of pre-certified backflow testers in your area can be found on our website using the same link above. If you have an assembly that has not been tested in the past 12 months, please schedule a test, and your tester will submit your test report to Thurston PUD for you.

Tracking backflow testing is one of the many ways that we work hard to keep your water safe. If you don't know where to start, we are always here to help you, so please give us a call at (360) 357-8783 or toll-free at (866) 357-8783. Let's keep our community's drinking water safe--together.

Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Linda Oosterman

District 2

Russell E. Olsen

District 3

Chris Stearns

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What's Happening at the PUD?

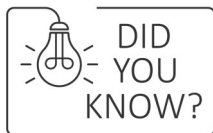
Reminders from PUD Staff



Here are a few reminders from the staff here at Thurston PUD:

- Our offices will be closed on Monday, July 4, 2022 for Independence Day.
- If you would like to pay your bill online, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org and click “Pay Bill Online” in the upper left portion of your screen. You can also visit our payment vendor, Civic Pay, directly at www.thurston.merchantransact.com/login.
- Thurston PUD is not affiliated with DOXO or any other third-party payment vendor. ***Please use our website to make payments online to avoid any fees.***
- As always, the PUD does not charge any fees to make your payment through our website or by phone through either our Customer Service Team or automated phone payment system.
- If you would like to sign up for Auto Pay, please visit www.thurstonpud.org/credit.htm to get started.

If you have any questions about your account, please contact our Customer Service Team at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or via email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org. **If you experience a water service emergency, please call us at (360) 357-8783 or toll-free at (866) 357-8783.** If you are calling after normal business hours, you will be connected with our answering service and on-call staff.



During the first quarter of 2022, almost 52 percent of PUD customer payments were made electronically! Making payments electronically can save you time and postage. If you would like to sign up for Auto Pay or electronic statements, please visit our website at www.thurstonpud.org/credit.htm to get started.

Keeping Your Meter Accessible

There are many different types of water meters, although most PUD customers have an analogue water meter that our Meter Readers must physically read each month. Keeping your water meter accessible is important, so please help our crew by making sure you:

- Keep surrounding plants and vegetation trimmed back from your water meter.
- Clear excess dirt, bark, or mulch away from the meter.
- Ensure that landscaping, fixtures, or automobiles are not covering your meter.

Keeping your water meter accessible not only allows us read your meter without but also ensures that other members of our crew can perform maintenance or respond quickly in cases of an emergency. Questions? Contact us at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.



Jessie Salter,
Accounting Assistant

Employee Spotlight

The PUD recently hired Accounting Assistant Jessie Salter. Jessie hails from a small town in Wyoming, and moved to Washington after obtaining a Bachelor's degree at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Prior to being hired by the PUD, Jessie worked in banking. Outside of work, Jessie likes to exercise, walk her dog, and spend time with her family.

At the PUD, Jessie's main duty is related to Accounts Payable functions: she processes invoices and mails checks to vendors used by the PUD. Jessie also performs a range of other accounting tasks. Welcome, Jessie!

Ways to Save Water in the Summer

Increased water use often correlates with summer's rising temperatures, primarily due to an increase in lawn, landscape, and garden watering. Saving water helps our communities can help you save time and money. Here are several water-saving tips you can use this summer:

Tips for Outdoor Water Use

- **Water your yard in the morning or evening.** Water evaporates quickly when the sun is high, so irrigate your lawn or garden early in the morning or late in the evening.
- **Tune up your system.** If you have an irrigation system, inspect the system and check for leaks or broken/clogged sprinkler heads. Make sure that your sprinklers are not spraying areas you do not want to irrigate, like the sidewalk, street, or your driveway.
- **Cover your pool.** If you have a pool, be sure to cover it when not in use to prevent water evaporation.
- **Go to the car wash.** Washing a car at home can use 100 gallons of water or more. Commercial car washes often use much less water, repurposes or recycles the water that is used, and disposes of cleaning products and pollutants properly and efficiently.



Tips for Indoor Water Use

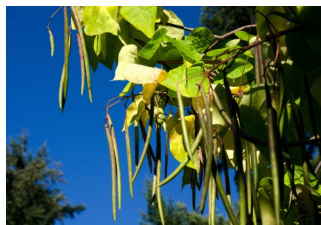
- **Check for leaks.** Be sure to check your property for leaks, including your toilets. For an easy-to-understand article and video on how to check a toilet for leaks, please visit www.lowes.com/n/how-to/test-toilet-for-leaks.
- **Use the dishwasher.** Handwashing dishes can use several more gallons of water than using a more efficient Energy Star-rated appliance.
- **Shorten your shower.** Trimming two minutes off of your shower can save more than 1,000 gallons of water per person in your household each year!

For more information on water conservation, please visit the PUD's website at www.thurstonpud.org/water-systems.htm. If you have any questions about your account, please contact our Customer Service Team at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or via email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.

Water-Wise Plants for Western Washington

Our climate in Western Washington is characterized by wet, mild winters and dry summers. A majority of rainfall here in the Puget Sound region occurs in the winter, and it is not uncommon for less than one inch of rain per month to accumulate from mid-June through the end of September. Water-wise and native vegetation can help save water and cut down on your water bill.

There are several varieties of water-wise trees, shrubs, and groundcovers that Western Washingtonians can plant at their property. Below are a few examples of these plants, according to the Washington State University (WSU) Extension.



Above: Bean pods on a Northern catalpa tree

- Northern catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*), deciduous tree
- Serviceberry (*Amelanchier grandiflora*), deciduous tree
- Blue Blossom (*Ceanothus thyrsiflorus*), evergreen shrub
- Kinnikinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), evergreen groundcover

For more information on water-wise plants or other publications on gardening and landscaping for our region, please visit the WSU Extension website at <https://pubs.extension.wsu.edu/general-gardening>.

Water Meter Projects

Water is a shared public resource, and water meters provide information that water systems need to manage their supplies, especially during emergencies. Water meters are listed on the PUD's Asset Management Plan (AMP) so that we can predict when and how much it will cost to replace these devices in the future. Usually, water meters can last 20 years and are replaced at the end of their useful life cycle.

As part of our commitment to ongoing water system improvements, the PUD's Field Operations Team has a few water meter projects in progress this year. Earlier this year, water meters were replaced at the following water systems.

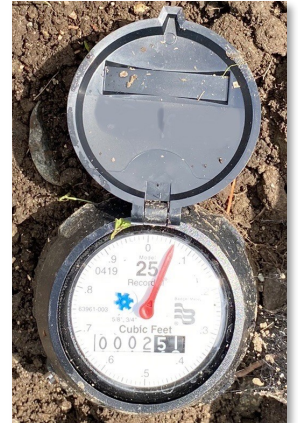
- Deschutes Village (683) in Rainier
- Roy 325th (668) in Roy

New water meter installation is planned for the following water systems later this year.

- Burnsville (676) in Tumwater (Prine Villa Apartment Complex only)
- The Vineyard (696) in Olympia

Replacing water meters ensures meter reading accuracy, reducing the change of errors of your water bill. Meters and usage readings are also an important means to track Water Use Efficiency (WUE). Our crew is continually evaluating individual water meters for replacement, not only the ones listed above.

If you have any questions about your account or your water service, please contact our office at (360) 357-8783, toll-free at (866) 357-8783, or via email at PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org.



Above: A Badger meter installed at a residential property.

Hot Weather Safety

The risk of heat exhaustion and heat stroke increase with rising outdoor temperatures. When temperatures rise to extreme highs, reduce your risk by taking the following precautions.

- Stay indoors and in an air-conditioned space as much as possible.
- Drink plenty of fluids but avoid beverages that contain alcohol, caffeine, or a lot of sugar.
- Never leave any person or pet in a parked vehicle.
- Ensure that pets have plenty of water.
- Cover windows that receive morning or afternoon sun.

If you go outside

- Plan strenuous outdoor activities for early or late in the day when temperatures are cooler.
- Take frequent breaks when working outdoors.
- Wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunscreen and light-colored, loose-fitting clothes.
- At the first signs of heat illness (dizziness, nausea, headaches, muscle cramps), move to a cooler location, rest for a few minutes, and slowly drink a cool beverage. **Seek medical attention immediately if you do not feel better.**
- Avoid sunburn by using a sunscreen lotion with a high SPF (sun protection factor) rating and reapply throughout the day as recommended.
- Avoid extreme temperature changes (like taking a cool shower after coming in from hot temperatures) as this can result in hypothermia, particularly for elderly or very young people.