



Thurston PUD Newsletter

We are committed to providing safe, reliable, affordable, and sustainable water services to our customers.

March 2026

What is Flushing? Why is it Done?

By David Gruver, Acting Director of Field Operations

PUD staff perform routine maintenance and flushing of the water mains to help ensure the highest water quality for our valued customers by removing the natural iron, manganese, or other sediment buildup in water mains.

What Happens During the Flushing Process?

Flushing a water line is the act of periodically sending a surge of water through a pipe which scours the pipe to remove minerals and other naturally occurring deposits. It is one of the many preventative maintenance activities the PUD uses that can improve water quality.

Why Does the District Need to Flush the Distribution System?

Our water mains are flushed to remove sediment and minerals that have collected in the distribution system. This sediment can cause color issues and even taste and odor issues if not routinely removed through flushing. Flushing frequency varies from system to system and mostly depends on the composition of the earth minerals found in that area. All water is different.

How Will I Know When Flushing Will Occur in My Area?

Our staff will send you an automated call informing you of the planned maintenance work at your water system, typically three (3) days in advance. Generally, flushing will take place between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

What Will I See While the District Is Flushing?

Please be on the lookout for notice signs and the crews working in the field running water through our hydrants in and around the District. Please slow down when you see the flushing crew, as there may be water on the roadways for short periods during these operations. Please watch for our employees and drive slowly through any standing water you may encounter.

What Should I Do If I Have Water Discoloration During This Process?

If you do have some discoloration during or after we complete mainline flushing, do not be concerned. The discoloration will usually clear up after a short period of flushing your personal service line and plumbing. It's best to flush from an outside spigot or hose. For indoor flushing, we recommend using a bathtub faucet to flush as sediment can get trapped and clog sink faucet screens. Please run the **Cold Water** tap for 10 minutes or until the water runs clear. You can call the office to receive a flushing credit, you will need to report the length of time you flushed to Customer Service. If flushing doesn't clear the water, please notify Customer Service at (360) 357-8783.



David Gruver, Acting Director of Field Operations

Thurston PUD Commissioners

District 1

Jim Campbell

District 2

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District 3

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Important Messages

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Keep Your Meter Accessible

Our staff reads your meter every month, and many of Thurston PUD's water meters are read manually. This means our crew routinely needs access to the meter's location. Please keep your meter accessible so our staff can quickly read your meter on the first visit to your property. If your meter is obstructed, a meter reader will have to report this information to our billing crew, who then has to estimate your meter read for billing purposes. If the meter is obstructed for more than one month, your account may be subject to non-compliance fees. By keeping your meter box clear, you can avoid this charge. Additionally, a clear box makes it easy to ensure that the lid fits properly, is safe and can be quickly turned off in an emergency. See examples below of both obstructed and unobstructed meters as well as tips on how to keep your meter accessible.

Trees, bushes, and plantings

- Trim bushes, trees, and grass that block the way or cover the meter. During the growing season, plants can cover a water meter box very quickly.
- Please minimize plants in the area which meter readers must travel to get to your meter. We would like to avoid any accidental damage to your prized plantings.

Pets

- Keep pets away from the path that leads to your meter.
- If you have a guard dog for security, please let us know so that we can make sure that our meter readers and other utility personnel are aware.
- We may ask that you arrange to confine the dog during the day that your meter will be read.

Objects that cover or block your meter

- Please make sure that no objects cover or block access to the meter box. Common items we have found blocking water meters include cars, trailers, garbage cans and recycling bins, construction equipment or supplies, and landscape bark or gravel.



There are water meters under there!



Perfect access to a meter.

Locked gates

- If your meter is located behind a gate that is normally kept locked, please contact us to arrange access. We can obtain codes from customers who wish to secure their property. And, as long as the lock is accessible from the exterior of the gate, this presents little problem for our meter readers' access.

Your address

- Please ensure your house address is clearly displayed on your residence.
- This also assists emergency personnel who may need to find your home in a hurry.

World Water Day—March 22, 2026

World Water Day is an annual United Nations (UN) Observance which began in 1993. World Water Day is held on March 22nd each year and aims to celebrate water and raise awareness on the two billion people living without access to safe water. For 2026, the theme is 'Where water flows, equality grows', and focuses on safe water and sanitation. For more information, please visit www.unwater.org.



Staff Spotlight—Water Distribution Operators

March 22 is World Water Day, which is a great opportunity to recognize and honor the hardworking people who keep the water supply to our communities safe.

Water Distribution Operators are unsung heroes for our utility systems, often working in poor weather conditions to ensure reliable water service for homes, businesses, and industries. At Thurston PUD, we deeply appreciate our Water Distribution Operators as they brave storms, extreme temperatures, and challenging terrains to keep water flowing 24/7.

A Water Distribution Operator manages the infrastructure that transports potable water to consumers, ensuring safe pressure and supply. Some key responsibilities include operating pumps and valves, repairing water main breaks, monitoring system pressure, and sampling water quality. Here is a list of some important responsibilities water operators have:

Key Responsibilities:

- **System Operation:** Monitoring and controlling pumps, motors, and valves to regulate water pressure and flow throughout the distribution network.
- **Maintenance & Repair:** Repairing water main breaks, fixing service leaks, and maintaining infrastructure like storage tanks and pressure-reducing valves.
- **Water Quality Sampling:** Collecting water samples for laboratory testing to monitor chlorine residuals and bacteriological quality.
- **System Upgrades:** Installing, repairing, and reading water meters and service lines.
- **Operational Logging:** Maintaining accurate, detailed records of system pressures, pump run times, and maintenance activities.
- **Emergency Response:** Responding to emergency service calls (e.g., low-pressure complaints, main breaks) and performing on-call duties.
- **Safety Compliance:** Adhering to safety regulations, including confined space entry, traffic control, and handling chemicals.
- **Infrastructure Inspection:** Inspecting facilities to protect against vandalism and ensuring proper operation.
- **Utility Locating:** Identifying water lines to prevent damage during excavation.



**Join us in saying
thank you to our
Water
Distribution
Operators!**

**When you see
them working in
the field, take a
moment to thank
them. Their hard
work keeps water
flowing to our
homes every day.**

Say No to Backflow—Cross-Connection Control Questionnaire

Protecting public health is a priority for Thurston PUD and the Washington State Department of Health (DOH). In order to do so, it is imperative we comply with the regulations outlined in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 246-290-490.

DOH conducts Sanitary Surveys of all public Group A water systems. These surveys are thorough inspections of the PUD's water system facilities, records, and operations to identify conditions that may present a public health risk. Water systems with more than 15 connections undergo routine surveys every three (3) to five (5) years.



A bathtub faucet is an example of an air gap.

One component of the survey is a review of Thurston PUD's Cross-Connection Control Plan. These plans help prevent drinking water contamination within water systems. A few examples of common cross connections that require backflow devices to prevent contamination of a public water system include plumbed irrigation systems, hot tubs and swimming pools, and fire sprinkler systems.

A cross-connection is a physical connection between a drinking water pipe and any other non-potable substance. As an example, let's say you use a hose to fill up a water trough for your farm animals, and you leave the hose submerged in the water as it fills. If you don't have a backflow device connected to the hose bib and there is a water line break somewhere in your neighborhood, a backflow event can drain the water out of the trough and into the public water supply.

The simplest way to prevent backflow is through an air gap, which is a physical space between the water outlets and pipe or end destination (think bathtub faucet filling up a bathtub). For cross-connections that are a little more complex (like an irrigation system, pool, or hot tub) a cross-connection specialist can install a backflow device for you.

Thurston PUD is required to implement a Cross-Connection Control Program, but customers are responsible for backflow assembly installation, as well as initial and annual testing of these devices.

Over the next couple months, our team will be sending out Cross-Connection Control Questionnaires to customers who's water systems are scheduled for a Sanitary Survey this year. This questionnaire will help us send out annual testing reminders and continuously educate our customers on how to protect their water source. Thank you in advance for completing and returning the questionnaire.

Water Utility Scavenger Hunt!

Take your kids (or yourself) on a Water Utility Scavenger Hunt! Here is a list of some objects you can look for in your neighborhood as you walk around:



Fire Hydrant



Water Meter Box



Underground Utility Markings



Water System Pumphouse



Water Tower or Reservoir (storage)