



Public Utility District No. 1 of Thurston County

June 2015 Newsletter

Commissioner's Corner

By Chris Stearns,
Commissioner District 3



Commissioner Stearns

With so much in the news about the drought, it can be easily misled by headlines that we may have problems with our drinking sources in the Puget Sound this year. Department of Ecology website (<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/drought/index.html>) states, "Public water systems in Puget Sound are not expecting problems with water supplies this year." It also states, "Water restrictions are not expected this year in any major public water systems because of inadequate water supplies. However, water is a limited resource and Ecology encourages wise water use in the home and garden."

Thurston PUD encourages wise water use throughout the year and especially during the summer peak day demands. During these peak day demands, if more water is used than the system has been designed to produce, you could see problems like low pressure, air in the lines and treated systems may see quality issues. Here are some conservation tips to help reduce those peak day demands, which usually are in the morning when people are getting ready for work and during the evening when people are cooking dinner and getting chores completed.

- Run your washer and dishwasher only when they are full. You can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
- Fix any leaky faucets. You can save 140 gallons a week.
- Replace old toilets with newer low flow models. See our website for the toilet rebate program.
- Adjust your lawn mower to 1.5 to 2 inches. Taller grass shades roots and holds soil moisture better than short grass.
- Leave lawn clippings on your grass; this cools the ground and holds moisture.
- Water every three days and no more than an inch a week. This encourages the grass roots to grow deeper for a healthier lawn.
- The [Great Plant Picks \(www.greatplantpicks.org/\)](http://www.greatplantpicks.org/) website offers a list of 891 drought tolerant perennials, shrubs and trees for the Northwest.

For more tips you can go to <http://wateruseitwisely.com/100-ways-to-conserve/>

Water Quality—Hot Water Heaters

Thurston PUD suggests that our customers flush their hot water heater on an annual basis. This will lengthen the life of your unit and will help with water quality throughout the house. Systems with higher levels of minerals may want to consider flushing more to help alleviate smell, color and sediment.

You'll find the instruction on how to flush your hot water heater on page 4 of this newsletter or check with your local plumber.

We Need Your Help

Please contact us as soon as possible if you see changes to your normal water service. Examples: low pressure, high pressure, air in the lines, color change, and smell. These issues can mean that something has changed within your water system, like a leak or failure of a component. The sooner we know about the problem the sooner we can get it fixed.

Call Customer Service, M-F, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
24 hours a day, 7 days a week on-call services
360-357-8783, 866-357-8783, or email us at
pudcustomerservice@thurstonpud.org

High-Efficiency Residential Toilet Rebate Program - 2015

Thurston PUD is proud to announce that all single-family customers of any Thurston PUD owned water system has the opportunity to significantly reduce water use by replacing old toilets AND to receive a rebate of \$50 per toilet for doing so; limited to a total of 50 rebates. Save water and money. See our website www.thurstonpud.org for information and application for this program.



Did you know that you can access your Thurston PUD water account at our website? You can look at your bill, water usage, account information and more. You can also pay your bill on-line. Our website is: www.thurstonpud.org

Once you get to our home page, click on the Visa/MasterCard icon towards the bottom of the page. Please call the office at (866) 357-8783 if you have any questions or are having trouble accessing our website.

Options for paying your water bill.

- Pay in our office using cash, check, debit or credit card (Visa or MasterCard).
- Pay by phone or online at (www.thurstonpud.org) using your credit card, debit card or electronic check.
- Drop your payment off at the drop box located outside our building. Checks or money orders only.

Pay by direct debit (get the form on our website at www.thurstonpud.org). Click on links and forms, and then direct debit form.

Do we have your current information?

Occasionally a situation arises where we need to get in touch with you. For example, there are times we need to contact you for a scheduled water outage. We attempt to contact every customer on the water system in advance, if possible, before we turn the water off. We also may need to contact you for reasons such as a suspected leak, or to verify information on your account. If we don't have current information, you may miss an important call or email from us concerning your water service.

If you believe we do not have your current phone number, mailing address or email address, please give us a call at (866) 357-8783. You can also send us an email with your current information to: PUDCustomerService@thurstonpud.org to update your information.

How to Flush Your Water Heater

CAUTION: When flushing your water heater there is danger of being scalded. Be careful and keep children and pets away during the procedure.

Water heater manufacturers recommend flushing sediment from your storage type water heater periodically. How often your model needs to be flushed depends upon the quality of the water in your area. Areas with high mineral content will have to flush more often.

What is sediment, and why is it a problem? The sediment is sand or other grit from a well, or any other material that has gotten into the municipal water mains. Sediment can also come into your home after the water company flushes out their lines.

Over time, your heater can accumulate this sediment consisting of sand, gravel, grit, and various mineral deposits. This buildup can reduce the amount your water heater holds, create a variety of interesting noises, and reduce the efficiency of your unit. The buildup of sediment at the bottom can harden and sometimes clog the drain valve.

Cleaning this sediment from out of your water heater is not particularly difficult, here is how to do it:

If your water heater is gas, set the gas valve to "Pilot" to prevent the burners from coming on while you are flushing it. If your heater is electric be sure to turn off the circuit breakers. With an electric water heater, if the water level drops below the heating elements and the thermostat turns the elements on, the heating elements will probably burn out quite rapidly.

- ◆ Connect a garden hose to the drain valve at the bottom of the tank. Make sure the outlet of the hose is in a safe area away from pets and children. It can be very hot and can scald quickly!
- ◆ Close the shut off valve on the cold inlet to the water heater.
- ◆ Carefully open the temperature/pressure relief valve at the top of the tank by lifting the lever. Leave the valve open.
- ◆ Open the drain valve at the bottom of the heater allowing the water to flow out through the garden hose.
- ◆ If the sediment is clogging the drain valve then try closing the temperature/pressure relief valve and turn the cold inlet valve back on to "power flush" the sediment out.
- ◆ In some cases, the sediment hardens into large chunks that can block the drain valve. If so, then wait until everything cools down, remove the garden hose from the drain valve, remove the valve if necessary, and use a long screw driver to break up the clog.
- ◆ This is a very messy procedure.
- ◆ When the garden hose runs clear you are finished.
- ◆ Close the drain valve at the bottom of the tank and remove the garden hose.
- ◆ Close the pressure relief valve at the top of the tank if it is still open, and turn the cold inlet valve back on.
- ◆ Open a hot water faucet in your house, and let it run until no air bubbles come out.
- ◆ Turn the heater back on, and with gas units re-light the pilot light if necessary.

<http://www.chilipepperapp.com/flush.htm>

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