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# Your Water

**District Website**

Visit us online at [www.swmetrowater.org](http://www.swmetrowater.org) for more information about Your Water and the activities of the District

**Office Location and Hours**

8739 W. Coal Mine Ave.  
Littleton, CO 80123  
Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

## New Water Rates Start April 1st - Expect Water Bills to Increase Slightly



answers to two questions you may be asking:

**Why is Denver Water raising my rates?**

Denver Water has a large, intricate system with a lot of aging infrastructure. With a 5-year, \$1.3 billion capital plan, they are staying on top of the upgrades and new projects needed to keep this system running. To keep up with this necessary work, Denver Water is increasing the monthly fixed charge on your bill to help even out our revenues over the year so they can repair and upgrade their system.

This means less reliance on revenues from how much water customers use, which has become increasingly difficult to predict in recent years given the more frequent and extreme weather fluctuations.

**How much is my water bill going up?**

That depends on the type of customer you are and how you use water. Your bill is comprised of a fixed monthly charge and charges for how much water you use.

Every customer will see an increase to their **monthly fixed charge**. If you're like most residential customers who have a 3/4-inch meter, that charge will increase

In December 2016, the Denver Board of Water Commissioners adopted rate changes to fund essential repairs and upgrades to Denver Water's system, effective April 1, 2017.

Nobody likes to pay a bill. No matter how much you like a service or how essential it may be, handing over your hard-earned money to somebody else - particularly if that bill often increases from year to year - is never fun.

But when it comes to your water bill, the simple fact is the cost of running a complex water system continues to rise. Your bill helps to maintain and upgrade a vast infrastructure that allows Denver Water to collect and treat and deliver safe, reliable water, while also providing for essential fire protection services.

According to Denver Water, you will see some slight increases in your water bill starting April 1, 2017. Here are the

Monthly consumption (gallons)	Rate per 1,000 gallons		
		2016 Rates	2017 Rates
0 to AWC	Tier 1	\$2.80	\$2.68
AWC + 15,000	Tier 2	\$5.04	\$4.82
Greater than AWC + 15,000	Tier 3	\$6.72	\$6.43

### Want Updates From Southwest Metropolitan As They Happen? Try Our Free Email Alert Service

Southwest Metropolitan Water and Sanitation District offers a free service that will automatically keep you notified when specific areas of our website are updated. These areas include: News Articles, News Letters, Board Meeting Agendas, Board Meeting Minutes, District Projects, and Water and Sanitary Sewer Specifications.

To activate automated update emails, go to [www.swmetrowater.org](http://www.swmetrowater.org), scroll to the bottom left of the homepage, click on the registration link and fill out the registration form.

Please note that you won't be flooded with emails from us (we hate spam as much as you do!). You will only receive emails according to the schedule listed on the subscription page. We also will not sell or give this e-mail list to anyone else! Your privacy is important to us. Plus, you can unsubscribe at any time (details on how to do this will be in each email)

You're busy. We understand that. You

don't have the time to keep checking our website. We hope this service serves District customers well, informing you of District happenings between newsletter mailings. **Sign up now!**



### Rollercoaster

Continued from page 3

notice to our customers is not possible, however, District personnel will notify you in person and by a notice card left on your front door if the emergency repair will disrupt your service. Please keep in mind personnel will not notify customers during late night or early morning hours.

Please be aware that it can sometimes take many hours to repair some water main breaks because of the volume and severity of the break. While the District strives to repair these breaks in the quickest manner possible, as you would expect, we must do so in a way that minimizes inconveniences to our customers, and is protective of our personnel, other utilities, and the public. No matter the length of the service interruption District personnel will provide emergency water to those customers with exceptional needs (i.e. schools, hospitals, day cares, care of the elderly/disabled, etc.) upon request.

If you have any questions about water main breaks or wish to report a suspected break, call the District office at 303-979-2333.

## Garden-in-a-Box: Waterwise Gardening Made Easy



The Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC) is again making waterwise gardening fun and simple with its annual “Garden-In-A-Box” sale for 2017. Garden-In-A-Box are professionally designed, plant by numbers gardens which contain perennial and Xeric (low-water) plants for your landscaping needs. They make basic xeriscaping easy, affordable and convenient. CRC has again partnered with Denver Water to make gardens available to all residents of Southwest Metropolitan at a discounted price where they can receive \$25 off select gardens.

This year’s designs include: the Sunset Garden, Rocky Mountain Retreat, Seasons of Shade, Honey Bee Heaven, Pollinators’ Paradise, Xeric Greatest Hits and the Spaghetti Dinner gardens. The Garden-In-A-Box kit provides the plants and easy-to-follow planting and care instructions. New for this year is the Ivy Rain Barrel to assist you with watering your garden by using rainwater harvesting, which is now legal in Colorado. Gardens cost between \$74 and

\$144, depending on the design chosen and can be ordered online at the CRC’s garden shop at <https://conservationcenter.org/gardens/shop/> from March to June.

To claim your \$25 discount, you will have to first “Proceed to Checkout” in the garden store where you will be prompted to select your water provider, select “Denver Water”. Your discount should then automatically be applied to your order.

CRC will schedule several “Garden Pick Up Days” at various locations during the months of May and early June. To select your pick up, you must “Proceed to Checkout” on the online store where you will then be prompted to select your pick up location, date, and time.

Gardens and discounts are limited and always sell out, so make sure you order your garden sooner rather than later!

To obtain more information about the Garden-in-a-Box program, or to see more details about the specific gardens offered, visit the program’s website at <https://conservationcenter.org/gardens/>.

### Rates

*Continued from page 1*

**from \$8.79 to \$11.86 per month.**

To help offset the fixed monthly charge, the charge per 1,000 gallons for many customers will see a small decrease in 2017.

Adding up those two elements, if you use 115,000 gallons of water or less a year in the same way you did in 2016, you can expect to see an annual increase of about \$18, which averages out to a monthly increase of about \$1.50 a month. (Summer bills are typically higher because of outdoor water use.)

No one likes paying higher bills, but

while rates are going up, Denver Water is committed to keeping water affordable, particularly for the essential indoor water use that is vital for drinking, cooking and sanitation. According to Denver Water, in 2017, customers will continue to pay the lowest rate for what they use indoors.

If you’d like to talk over your bill with someone, contact Denver Water’s Customer Care team at 303-893-2444, and a representative will help you calculate your individual bill impacts, based on your personal water-use information.

## Construction Project Updates

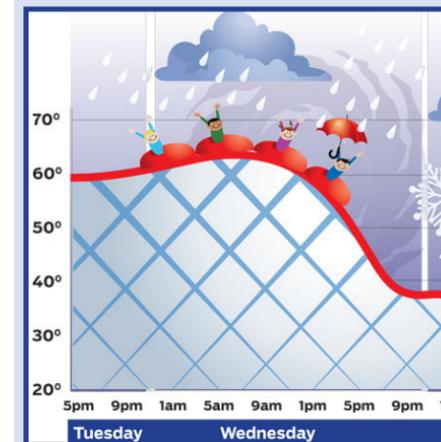


With Spring fast approaching, so is the District’s capital construction season. The 2017 Capital Improvement program consists of four projects with a proposed expenditure of \$680,612. The following projects are currently being designed with estimated construction dates beginning in Spring and Summer.

- W. Chatfield Ave. Water Main Replacement – This project will replace 1,649 feet of 8-inch asbestos-cement pipe located in W. Chatfield Ave. between S., Pierce St. and S. Lamar Ct. with 16-inch PVC pipe.
  - Variable Frequency Drive (VFD) Replacement – This project will replace the VFDs for Pumps 2, 3, and 4 located within the District’s Hogback Pump Station with upgraded drives.
  - Herrick-Dale Subdivision Sewer Main Rehabilitation – This project will rehabilitate 2,745 feet of 8-inch concrete sewer pipe located in W. Chatfield Ave. using cured-in-place rehabilitation, reestablish 23 service connections and line 13 concrete manholes.
  - Fairway Vista Filing No. 2 Subdivision Sewer Main Installation – This project will see the installation of 111 feet of 8-inch PVC pipe located in W. Coal Mine Ave. and S. Newcombe Wy.
- More information relative to the above mentioned projects will appear on the District’s website located at [www.swmetrowater.org/page.cfm/ID/40/Current\\_Projects](http://www.swmetrowater.org/page.cfm/ID/40/Current_Projects) as it becomes available.
- If you have any questions about the projects, please contact Tony Cocozzella, project coordinator, at 303-979-2333.

## Temperature Swings Tough on Water Mains

Colorado winters can feel like a rollercoaster ride - in Southwest Metropolitan, it’s very normal to experience summer-like temperatures on Tuesday and winter snow on Wednesday. All those ups and downs make for interesting weather forecasts, but those temperature swings also take a toll on water mains under our streets.



When temperatures drop, the ground freezes, causing water molecules inside the soil to expand. The longer the temperature stays below freezing, the deeper the frost layer stretches below the surface. The frozen soil puts stress on the pipes and can cause them to fail. Pipes are also prone to failure when the weather warms up quickly after a cold spell. As the ground warms, the water molecules shrink and the ground shifts. This rollercoaster ride of cold-warm-cold temperatures contributes to water main breaks, creating an unexpected inconvenience for customers and motorists.

The process to safely repair a water main break involves many steps to ensure the safety of both personnel, the public and property. When a water main break is discovered, District operations personnel are dispatched to the area to determine the type and severity of the leak and to initiate immediate repairs to the broken water main.

Once repairs are underway your water service will be interrupted as the water flow is stopped to repair the broken section of water main in the affected area. In this emergency situation, advance

See *Rollercoaster* on page 4

## Leaks Can Run, But They Can’t Hide During Fix-a-Leak Week



Are you ready to chase down leaks? Household leaks can waste more than 1 trillion gallons of water annually nationwide? In fact, the average household leaks more than 10,000 gallons of water per year, or the amount of water it takes to wash 270 loads of laundry, and could be costing you an extra 10% on your water bills. Each year Southwest Metropolitan helps you hunt down the leaks during Fix a Leak Week. Mark your calendars for EPA’s ninth annual Fix a Leak Week which will take place March 20 through 26, but remember that you can find and fix leaks inside and outside your home to save valuable water and money all year long.

Did you know that in just ten minutes, you can search your home for leaks and crack down on water waste. Many common household leaks are quick to find and easy to fix. Worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and leaking showerheads are all easily correctable and can save on your utility bill expenses and water in your community, a precious resource in Colorado.

So put on your detective hat, lace up your running shoes, and take this 10-minute challenge to detect and chase down leaks!

### 1. Check Your Utility Bill

A place to start is to examine your utility bill for January or February. It’s likely that a family of four has a serious leak problem if its winter water use exceeds 12,000 gallons. You can also look for spikes - is your water use a lot higher this month than it was last month?

### 2. Check Your Water Meter

Check your water meter before and after a two-hour period when no water is being used. If the meter does not read exactly the same, you probably have a

leak.

### 3. Take a Toilet Test

Put a few drops of food coloring into the tank at the back of your toilet and let it sit for 10 minutes. If color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak. Make sure to flush afterward to avoid staining, and consider replacing your old toilet flapper if it is torn or worn.

### 4. Listen

Are you hearing a drip drip drip somewhere? A leaky faucet that drips at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons per year. That’s the amount of water needed to take more than 180 showers! A showerhead leaking at 10 drips per minute wastes more than 500 gallons per year. That’s the amount of water it takes to wash 60 loads of dishes in your dishwasher.

### 5. Go Outdoors

Do you remember the last time you used your garden hose and it leaked out the spigot? Chances are that it will still do the same thing this year if you didn’t fix it last year. This is an easy find and fix; replace the nylon or rubber hose washer and ensure a tight connection to the spigot using pipe tape and a wrench. Oh and if it’s the hose itself that is spraying water all over; give your wallet a gift by replacing the hose, it will pay for itself in no time.

Want to learn more about finding leaks and saving money? Check out the EPA’s WaterSense website at [https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/our\\_water/fix\\_a\\_leak.html](https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/our_water/fix_a_leak.html).

