

FALL 2019

Fairfax Water

STRAIGHT FROM THE TAP

What Is Backflow Prevention?

An example of a commonly installed backflow prevention device.



What Is Backflow?

Backflow is the highly unusual circumstance of a reverse flow of water or liquids into the water supply via a cross-connection (a link between potable water and unsafe or unknown sources of water). This process can occur when the water pressure drops and a suction effect occurs, drawing water or liquids the wrong way. A garden hose resting in a backyard puddle, pond, or pool can be a cross-connection.

If the water supply pressure were to drop, the water from the puddle, pond, or pool can be suctioned back through the hose and into the drinking water supply in an event called backflow.

What Can I Do To Prevent Backflow?

Luckily, backflow prevention devices are likely already installed in your home to protect your plumbing, hose connections, and irrigation systems (left). You can also prevent backflow by avoiding the creation of cross-connections. This can be as simple as keeping a garden hose away from unsafe sources of water, such as puddles or ponds.

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Proposed Changes to the Commodity Rate

Important Rate Information for 2020

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 12, 2019, the Fairfax Water Board of Directors will hold a public hearing on proposed revisions to the schedule of rates, fees, and charges. Proposed revisions include a change in the commodity charge from \$3.07 to \$3.20 per 1,000 gallons, effective with meter readings taken on or after April 1, 2020. See page 2 for a list of some of the proposed changes.

The public hearing will be held at Fairfax Water's main office at 8570 Executive Park Avenue in Fairfax. Visit www.fairfaxwater.org/rates for a copy of the proposed changes and directions to the main office. To speak at the hearing or obtain a hard copy of the proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges, call 703-698-5600, TTY 711.

Even with this increase, Fairfax Water's commodity rates will remain among the lowest in the Washington metropolitan region. The chart on page 2 compares regional utilities based on current commodity rates and service charges.

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Important Rate Information for 2020 (Continued from page 1)

The following table shows some of the proposed revisions to Fairfax Water's rates, fees, and charges. If approved, the revisions will be effective with meter readings taken on or after April 1, 2020. For a complete list of the proposed revisions, visit www.fairfaxwater.org/rates.

Charge	Description of Rate, Fee or Charge	Current	Proposed
Commodity Charge	The charge per 1,000 gallons of water used in the previous three months	\$3.07*	\$3.20*
Quarterly Billing Service Charge	Based on meter size, it offsets the cost of meter reading, repair and replacement, service repairs, billing, collecting, accounting, etc.	\$12.20**	\$14.40**
Peak Use Charge	The charge per 1,000 gallons of water applied to established accounts during billing periods from June through November for water consumption that is 1.3 times the winter quarter consumption or 6,000 gallons above the winter quarter consumption, whichever is greater	\$3.80*	\$3.85*
Turn Off/Turn On Charge	Charge to restore water service that has been disconnected due to nonpayment or noncompliance; must be paid before water service can be restored	\$48	\$49
Account Charge	Appears only on initial bills to cover the cost of the office and field work required to open a new account	\$39	\$40

* Fees for the use of Fairfax Water fire hydrants would also change to include the proposed increase in the commodity charge.

** Charges reflect fees associated with standard 5/8 inch residential meter. Charges for larger residential and commercial meters are proposed to increase and are reflected in the proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges, available on our website at www.fairfaxwater.org/rates.

New Connection Charges	Description of Rate, Fees or Charge	Current	Proposed
Availability Charge	For service to be furnished through each new separate service connection	\$4,260	\$4,320
Local Facilities Charge	For each new service connection to an existing water main	\$15,285	\$18,030
Service Connection Charge	For each new service connection and meter installation prior to the approval of the application	\$1,300	\$1,370

Comparison of Regional Water Rates

This comparison is based on rates as of July 1, 2019, and on 18,000 gallons of residential water use by an established customer over a three-month winter period. The amount shown for each jurisdiction/utility includes the service charge and the commodity charge, which is the rate charged for a certain number of gallons.

Jurisdiction/Utility	Quarterly Water Charge
City of Manassas Park, VA	\$205.50
Town of Leesburg, VA (outside town limits)	\$185.47
Virginia-American Water Company (Prince William County, VA)	\$150.25
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (Montgomery/Prince George's counties, MD)	\$146.16
Town of Leesburg, VA (inside town limits)	\$141.43
City of Bowie, MD	\$139.99
DC Water	\$128.76
City of Rockville, MD	\$123.17
Virginia-American Water Company (City of Alexandria, VA)	\$115.05
Town of Vienna, VA	\$109.80
Arlington County, VA	\$84.60
Loudoun Water	\$80.17
City of Manassas, VA	\$80.10
Prince William County Service Authority	\$78.15
Fairfax Water	\$67.46
Town of Herndon, VA	\$65.85

What About Sewer Charges?

Fairfax Water does not provide your sewer service, but we do assist Fairfax County and the cities of Falls Church and Fairfax with sewer billing. This is a cost-saving measure and convenience for our customers. Your sewer rates and associated billing methodology are established by your sewer service provider. It is a combination of a base charge and usage. It may also include taxes and/or other fees. Visit www.fairfaxwater.org/sewer-charges to learn more.

What Is Backflow Prevention?

(Continued from p.1)

Avoid cross-connections by keeping hoses away from pools of water such as these.



What Does Fairfax Water Do To Prevent Backflow?

Fairfax Water coordinates with Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church to operate a joint Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Prevention Program. The operation of the joint program includes:

- Determining which sites require installation of a backflow prevention device based on hazard identification.
- Surveying premises to determine the presence of actual or potential hazards.
- Maintaining records of customer backflow prevention devices.
- Administering and enforcing backflow prevention device testing and inspection requirements.
- Issuing fire hydrant use permits ensuring compliance with backflow prevention requirements.
- Facilitating public outreach programs for education about cross-connection control and backflow prevention.

For more information, please visit the Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Prevention page on our website at the link below. You can send backflow-related questions to backflow@fairfaxwater.org or call 703-289-6381.

Fairfax Water Cross-Connections Page
www.fairfaxwater.org/cross-connection

The University of Southern California Foundation for Cross-Connection Control and Hydraulic Research
<https://fccchr.usc.edu/introduction.html>

Glad You Asked!

Q

How can I prevent pipes from freezing in my home this winter?

A

Whenever the temperatures dip down into the teens, we suggest that you leave a thin, steady stream of water running. This stream should measure out to be about a quarter gallon of water per minute. Doing so costs very little and can prevent expensive leaks and pipe repairs. Visit <https://www.fairfaxwater.org/your-plumbing> for more information on how to prepare your pipes for winter.



Fairfax Water



DON'T FORGET THE APP!
 AVAILABLE FOR IOS
 AND ANDROID



If you have a question or concern, contact us at pr@fairfaxwater.org or call 703-698-5600, TTY 711.



Newsletter Feedback

If you have comments or suggestions about the newsletter, please send an email to:

pr@fairfaxwater.org, call us at 703-289-6291, or write to us at this address:

Straight From the Tap Editor
Fairfax Water
8570 Executive Park Avenue
Fairfax, VA 22031

Important Numbers

Fairfax Water Services

Questions about water service or billing
703-698-5800

After hours/emergencies
703-698-5613

To report a water main break
703-698-5613 or email

watermainbreak@fairfaxwater.org

All other Fairfax Water departments
703-698-5600

Sewer Services

Fairfax County
Department of Public Works Wastewater
Trouble Response Center
703-323-1211
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/wastewater

City of Falls Church
Department of Public Works
703-248-5350
www.fallschurchva.gov

City of Fairfax
Department of Public Works
703-385-7810
www.fairfaxva.gov

Dig with C.A.R.E.

Miss Utility at 1-800-552-7001 or 811,
<http://va811.com/homeowners/how-to-when-to>



Use TTY 711 (Virginia Relay) for all numbers unless otherwise stated.



The 2019 Fairfax Water Kids' Art Contest has come to a close. The top three winners are published in this issue. You can find the others at: www.fairfaxwater.org/kidsart.



1st Place Winner
Elise of Fairfax



2nd Place Winner
Anaya of Herndon



3rd Place Winner
Leela of Vienna

Want to know when we're closed for holidays?
Check out our website!

www.fairfaxwater.org/holidaycalendar



Fairfax Water is a public, non-profit water authority serving nearly two million people in the Northern Virginia communities of Fairfax County, Loudoun, Prince William, Fort Belvoir, Herndon, Dulles, Vienna, Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax City.



Water-Saving Tip

Lawn care is less demanding during the fall but should not be ignored. A healthy lawn requires at least one inch of water every week. For more water-saving tips, visit www.wateruseitwisely.com.