

2024

WATER QUALITY OVERVIEW

ARLINGTON COUNTY



Arlington County's Water Supply

Safe, Dependable Water from the Tap

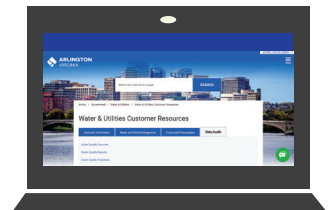
Arlington's water supply meets or exceeds all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Virginia Department of Health safety standards. This annual "consumer confidence report," required by the Safe Drinking Water Act, tells you where your water comes from, the test results that speak to quality and information about our water system.

Arlington County works with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure that our regional water supply system is collecting, purifying and pumping water in compliance with all existing regulations.

Dedicated to Quality

Arlington has more than 250 employees dedicated to operating and maintaining the water infrastructure, making sure our drinking water is safe and meets or exceeds industry standards. This combined team from the Department of Environmental Services' Water, Sewer and Streets Bureau; Water Pollution Control Plant; and Customer Service Office provides consistently reliable quality and care.

View water data from the County's full 2023 Annual Water Quality Report by visiting water.arlingtonva.us.



Where does your water come from?

Arlington's water comes from the Potomac River. It is treated at the Dalecarlia Water Treatment Plant, run by the Washington Aqueduct, a division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Treated water is pumped from the Dalecarlia plant in the District of Columbia to Arlington County, where it's conveyed through a network of approximately 500 miles of pipeline to homes and businesses. In addition to the pipelines, the water distribution system includes:

- 16,000 valves
- 3,900 fire hydrants
- 38,000 water service connections

Typical daily water consumption for our customers is approximately 20 million gallons a day (MGD), with a peak approaching 33 MGD on the hottest summer days. Our average annual use per household is about 48,000 gallons.

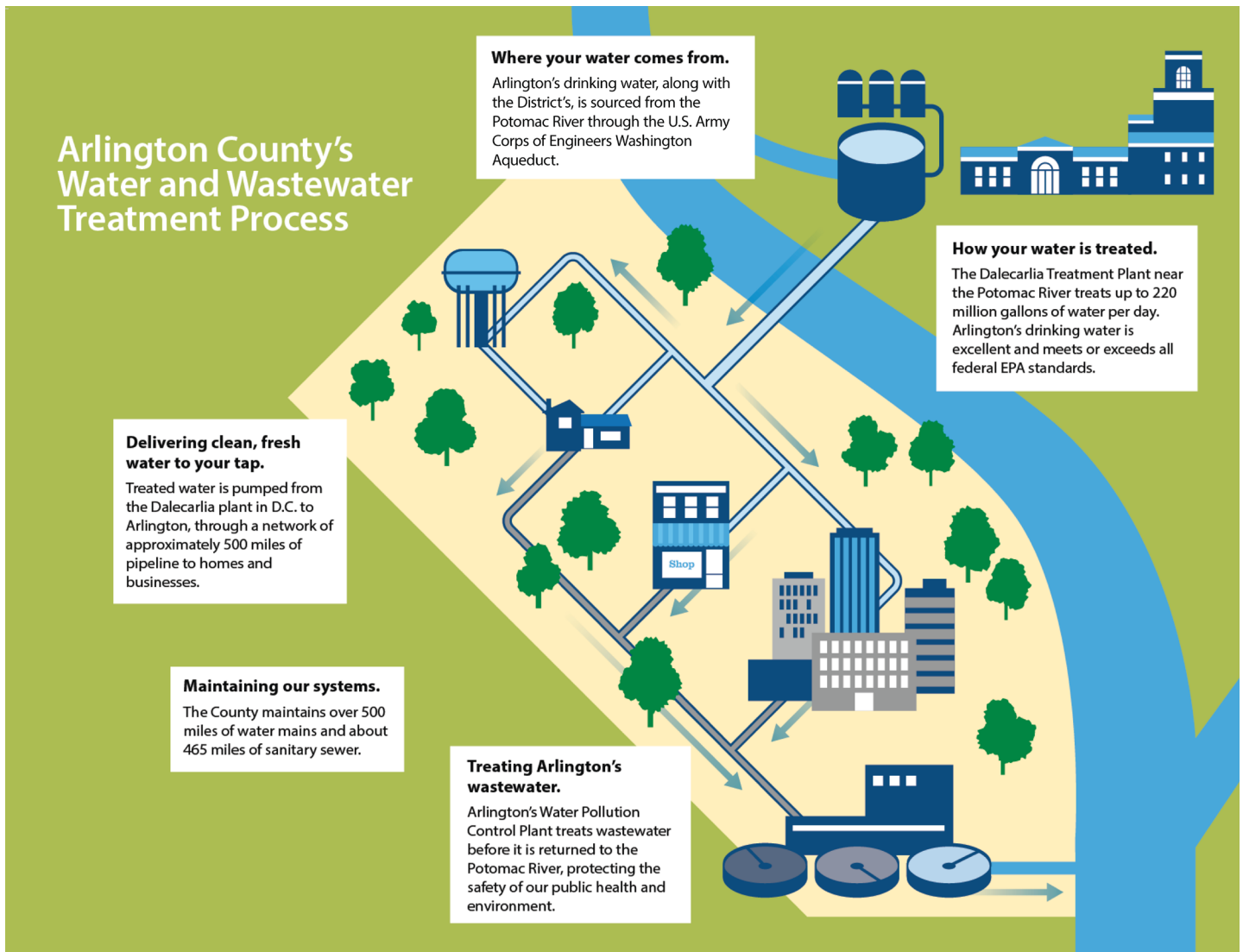


DRINK UP!

The County delivered approximately 7.2 billion gallons of water in FY 2023. That's around 115 billion 8-ounce glasses of water.

Annual Spring Water Cleaning

Every year for approximately six weeks, we switch disinfectants from chloramine back to chlorine to flush out the water distribution system and maintain water quality. This is standard practice for many U.S. water systems that use chloramine for most of the year. Learn more about the disinfectant switch at: bit.ly/ACWaterQuality.



What's new in Arlington for utility customers?

Increases Coming for Water-Sewer and Solid Waste Rates

Beginning July 1, 2024, residential customers will see their quarterly billing rates increase for the new fiscal year. The base charge for water will increase from \$16.37 to \$16.81 per quarter, while the sewer base charge will rise from \$13.52 to \$13.95 per quarter. The sewer use rate will also increase from \$9.61 to \$10.29 per quarter. In addition, the annual household solid waste rate will increase from \$406.14 to \$415.75. Find more utility rate information at bit.ly/ACWaterSewerRates.

Apply for Stormwater Utility Credits Starting Nov. 1

Have you taken steps to reduce stormwater runoff or pollution on your property in 2024? Voluntary actions such as planting trees or installing a permeable driveway may make residential property owners eligible to receive credit through Arlington's Stormwater Utility Credit Program.

The application period for voluntary stormwater utility credits will be open from Nov. 1, 2024, through Jan. 15, 2025. Voluntary credit applications must be submitted online through the Report a Problem tool on the County website at arlingtonva.us/Report-a-Problem.

Voluntary credit activities may be completed anytime between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2024, for credit on your 2025 stormwater utility fee bill. Approved credits will be applied for one full calendar year from the date of approved application, split equally between the first and second half real property tax bills during the calendar year.

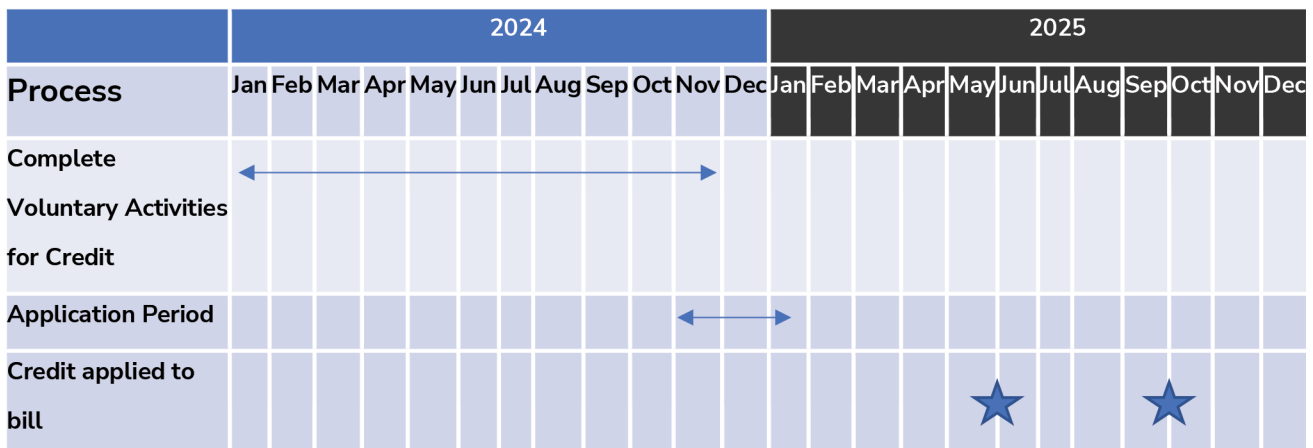
**Voluntary Actions:
5% each**

- Conservation Landscaping
- Tree Planting
- Rainwater Collection

**Voluntary Actions:
10% each**

- Rain Garden
- Permeable Driveway

Voluntary actions for residential property owners



The credit process through 2024/25

Learn more about the Stormwater Utility fee at arlingtonva.us/stormwaterutility

Water Main Breaks

While Arlington is renewing our water mains at a rate that exceeds expected useful life, breaks in the pipes are both unavoidable and unpredictable. Each break brings its own set of challenges. Small breaks are easier to fix but can be harder to find. Large breaks can wreak havoc on traffic, damage infrastructure and cause water shortages.

What Causes Breaks?

In addition to age, other factors in water main breaks include:

- Variations in water pressure
- Corrosion
- Seasonal temperature changes
- Installation configuration
- Previous repairs

How Do We Know When a Pipe Breaks?

We regularly monitor water pressure at various points in the system — a drop in pressure can signal a problem. But often, Water, Sewer and Streets Bureau staff learns about a break when a resident calls the 24-hour emergency hotline at 703-228-6555 to report water running in an unusual location. A crew is sent to investigate.



How to Report a Water Main Break

If you suspect a water main break, call the 24-hour emergency hotline at 703-228-6555 right away. Once our water team has been notified, an experienced employee or crew is dispatched to investigate and assess the problem.

Water main breaks that leave customers without service are given highest priority for repair around the clock. Though crews work as quickly as possible, completion can take eight hours or more to allow staff to: identify gas and other nearby lines; isolate the damaged section of pipe; assemble materials and equipment on-site; excavate; evaluate the break; and finally, effect the repair.

When Water Service is Restored

In most cases, when the water pressure returns, you'll need to run the cold water tap for a few minutes to clear the pipes. Use of hot water may draw discolored water into your hot water heater. If after five minutes you still notice discoloration or a strange odor, call the 24-hour emergency hotline at 703-228-6555. A crew can be dispatched to flush the system through fire hydrants and/or at your meter location.



What Should I Do? Frequently Asked Questions

My water is cloudy and/or milky-colored.

This is typically due to air in the line and is harmless. If you let the water sit in a glass or run your water for a short time, it should clear as the air dissolves. If not, call 703-228-6555.

My water has a reddish and/or rusty tint.

The reddish tint is iron oxide from the water distribution piping. Sudden changes in the system, such as when a fire hydrant is opened, can stir up the iron oxide sediments and cause temporary discoloration. If you run your water for a short time, it should clear. If not, call 703-228-6555. Even though the water may be discolored and has sediments, disinfectants are still present and the water is safe to drink once it has been flushed of the sediments.

The reddish water caused a load of laundry to be discolored.

Call 703-228-6555 and an operator will have a special laundry detergent delivered to your home. Use this product according to the directions and this will remove the discoloration from the clothes. Keep the clothes wet until the product is delivered.

How do I get my drinking water tested?

Contact a private laboratory for individual analysis of your water. We recommend using a lab certified by the state. We continually perform water quality testing in accordance with state and federal regulations. We're unable to provide testing on an individual basis.

Water Infrastructure Maintenance

As part of Arlington’s asset management program, water distribution mains are regularly evaluated for rehabilitation or replacement. This program helps us understand the current state of our inventory and ensure that we renew or replace the system before failure and plan for the costs. There are several water system maintenance programs to ensure that the distribution system continues to operate effectively and efficiently, and to renew aging infrastructure. These include:

- Distribution valve maintenance
- Large valve maintenance
- Fire hydrant maintenance
- Fire hydrant painting
- Water main cleaning and relining
- Annual water main flushing
- Water main replacement



Fire hydrants are flushed every spring as part of the disinfectant switch in the water distribution system.

EPA Finalizes Regulations for PFAS Chemicals

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released final regulations for six types of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in drinking water on April 10, 2024. A preliminary review of the standards indicated that Arlington’s water will comply with the new regulations and that our water supply continues to meet or exceed all EPA and Virginia Department of Health (VDH) safety standards.

PFAS are a family of hundreds of manufactured chemicals used in a wide variety of commercial, industrial, and household products including cookware, toiletries, paints, fabrics, and fire-fighting foams. PFAS have been manufactured for at least 50 years.

Arlington County has participated in several rounds of drinking water testing with the Washington Aqueduct and VDH that have shown low levels of some PFAS compounds. None of the test results have exceeded the EPA’s recently finalized regulatory limits, and many of the test results have not detected the targeted PFAS compounds in our drinking water.

Find results from prior testing and more information about PFAS at arlingtonva.us and search “About PFAS.”

Report the Material of Your Water Service Line

Arlington County is conducting an inventory of water service line material in our system following the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) 2021 Revised Lead and Copper Rule. The County’s water system does not have lead pipes and we do not know of any lead service lines on the residential property side. In 1991, per the original EPA regulations, the County inspected about 25% of service lines and did not find any lead service lines. The County never used lead pipes for the County-owned part of the service line.

We must conduct this inventory to comply with the EPA’s revised rule by October 2024—and you can help us by reporting the material of your water service line. Go to arlingtonva.us/Water-Service-Line-Inventory for directions on how to check your water service line material and upload photos and results. If you need assistance or have questions, email waterserviceinventory@arlingtonva.us.

Water Testing

Arlington’s water is tested regularly to ensure it meets the stringent federal and state standards for drinking water. Our water quality specialist utilizes one of the County’s 150 electric vehicles—which adds to Arlington’s continued commitment to environmental sustainability.








Advice For Special Populations

Some people may be more vulnerable to contaminants in drinking water than the general population. Immuno-compromised people such as those undergoing chemotherapy, recovering from organ transplants, receiving treatment for HIV/AIDS and some elderly and infants can be at risk of infections. These people should seek advice from their health care providers about drinking water. EPA/CDC guidelines on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by cryptosporidium, Giardia, and other microbial contaminants are available from the Safe Drinking Water Hotline, 1-800-426-4791.

Tips for Conserving Water

Drinking water is a precious resource that should be used wisely. Water conservation should be thought of not only in times of drought, but also as a daily practice. Daily water conservation will not only save water and energy, it will also save you money on your water bill.

DO YOU KNOW HOW MUCH WATER YOU'RE USING?
Typical Water Consumption:

 Garden Hose 300-800 gallons per hour	 Washing Machine 40 gallons per load
 Water Taps 5 gallons per minute	 Dishwasher 12 gallons per load
 Older Toilets: 3.5-7 gallons per flush Newer Toilets: 1.6 gallons per flush Leaking Toilet: 200-4,000 gallons per day	

Leaks

Homeowners are responsible for pipes within their house, as well as the water service line from their house to the water meter box. If you think you have a leak, you can request an investigation by calling 703-228-5000. If you see water coming out of the ground near your water meter box, call 703-228-6555. We'll investigate this at no charge to you. Get more information about our Leak Adjustment Policy: water.arlingtonva.us/customer-service/resolve-high-bills.

Take a Toilet Test

Toilets are one of the most common sources of leaks in homes. 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.



Saving When It's Hot Outside

Summer's rising temperatures often coincide with rising outdoor water use, primarily due to an increase in lawn and landscape watering. While using water efficiently is important throughout the year, sometimes the timing of water use can make a big difference for community water supplies—and your water bill. In Arlington, average water consumption during the summer increases by over 35%. Follow these tips to save on your bill:

Step on it: Grass doesn't always need water just because it's hot out. Step on the lawn. If the grass springs back, it doesn't need water. An inexpensive soil moisture sensor can also show the amount of moisture at the plant's roots and discourage overwatering.

Leave it long: Raise your lawn mower blade. Longer grass promotes deeper root growth, resulting in a more drought-resistant lawn, reduced evaporation and fewer weeds.

Give your hose a break: Sweep driveways, sidewalks and steps rather than hosing them off. And don't forget to check for leaks at your spigot connection and tighten as necessary.

Resources for Customers

Arlington utility customers have several resources available to help with their water-sewer accounts, billing and more.

- Forms for New Accounts:
bit.ly/ACStartStop
- Customer Self Service Portal:
bit.ly/AC-CSS
- High Water Bill Adjustments Due to Leaks:
bit.ly/ACHighBills
- Customer Handbook:
bit.ly/ACCustomerHandbook
- Payment Plans (for those who qualify):
Call 703-228-5000

Contact Us

We encourage residents who have concerns about their bill to call the DES Customer Contact Center at 703-228-5000 or email DESContactCenter@arlingtonva.us. Customer service reps are available Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Project News

County Rehabilitates Spout Run Deep Sewer Line

This spring, County contractors completed a project to rehabilitate approximately 3,400 linear feet of the Spout Run Deep Sewer Line, a 33-inch sanitary sewer interceptor line that runs under Langston Boulevard (Route 29) and I-66 from Spout Run Parkway to North Nash Street.

The sewer line carries a significant amount of flow as part of the County's sanitary sewer system, with the pipe reaching depths up to 115 feet. Originally constructed in the 1930s, the pipe was chosen for rehabilitation after a closed-circuit television inspection identified debris in the line and corrosion damage.

The project used a trenchless rehabilitation method known as cured-in-place pipe (CIPP), which included deploying a temporary above-ground bypass to allow the sewer interceptor line to be rehabilitated without interrupting sewer service to residents and businesses. This innovative process is significantly less expensive and environmentally disruptive than replacing the pipe and is expected to provide at least 50 years of additional service, while also increasing sewer flow capacity.

Learn more about the sanitary sewer relining process at arlingtonva.us/sewer-maintenance/sanitary-sewer-relining. Find more information about the Spout Run Deep Sanitary Sewer Relining Project at arlingtonva.us/Spout-Run-Sewer-Relining.



Temporary bypass placed on Langston Boulevard and I-66.

Arlington to Pilot Remote Meter Reading Technology

Starting this summer, Arlington County will kick off a one-year pilot to transition 100 residential and commercial water meters from the current method of Automated Meter Reading (AMR) to Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI).

AMI technology allows meter readings to be transmitted to our billing system using cellular networks. This real-time monitoring and reporting of water usage will provide operating status of water meters and early leak detection alerts if there is a loss in water pressure or a potential water main break. If the pilot proves successful, in the future, utility customers will also be able to receive alerts of unexpected usage from their residential water meter, leading to water and cost savings.

Learn more about Advanced Metering Infrastructure at arlingtonva.us and search "Water Meters."

Planned Re-Gen Upgrades Recognized by NACWA

Arlington's Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) was recognized by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) in February with the 2024 National Environmental Achievement Award (NEEA) for an educational video about recovering renewable resources from wastewater through the planned Arlington Re-Gen upgrades.

The Re-Gen project is currently in design, with construction anticipated to begin in 2024-2025. The new processes will allow wastewater residuals to be recovered and converted into highly treated, nutrient-rich biosolids to use as fertilizer on soils, and biogas to serve as a renewable fuel source.

Watch the award-winning video and learn more about the project at arlingtonregen.com.



Lisa Racey, principal engineer at the WPCP (right), accepting the NEEA from NACWA.

View the full annual water quality report, including the summary of 2023 water quality data, at: bit.ly/ACWaterReports. To request a printed copy of the report, call 703-228-5000.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES – Water, Sewer, Streets