

2025

# WATER QUALITY OVERVIEW

**ARLINGTON COUNTY**



## Arlington County's Water Supply

### Safe, Dependable Water from the Tap

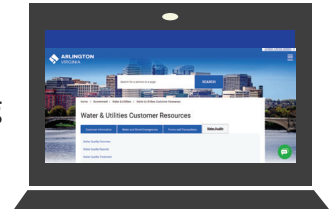
Arlington's water supply meets or exceeds all U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Virginia Department of Health safety standards. This annual "consumer confidence report," required by the Safe Drinking Water Act, tells you where your water comes from, the test results that speak to quality and information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

### Quality is the Mission

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 2024 Annual Water Quality Report by visiting [water.arlingtonva.us](https://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 550 miles of pipeline to homes and businesses. In addition to pipes, the water distribution system includes:

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

Typical 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.

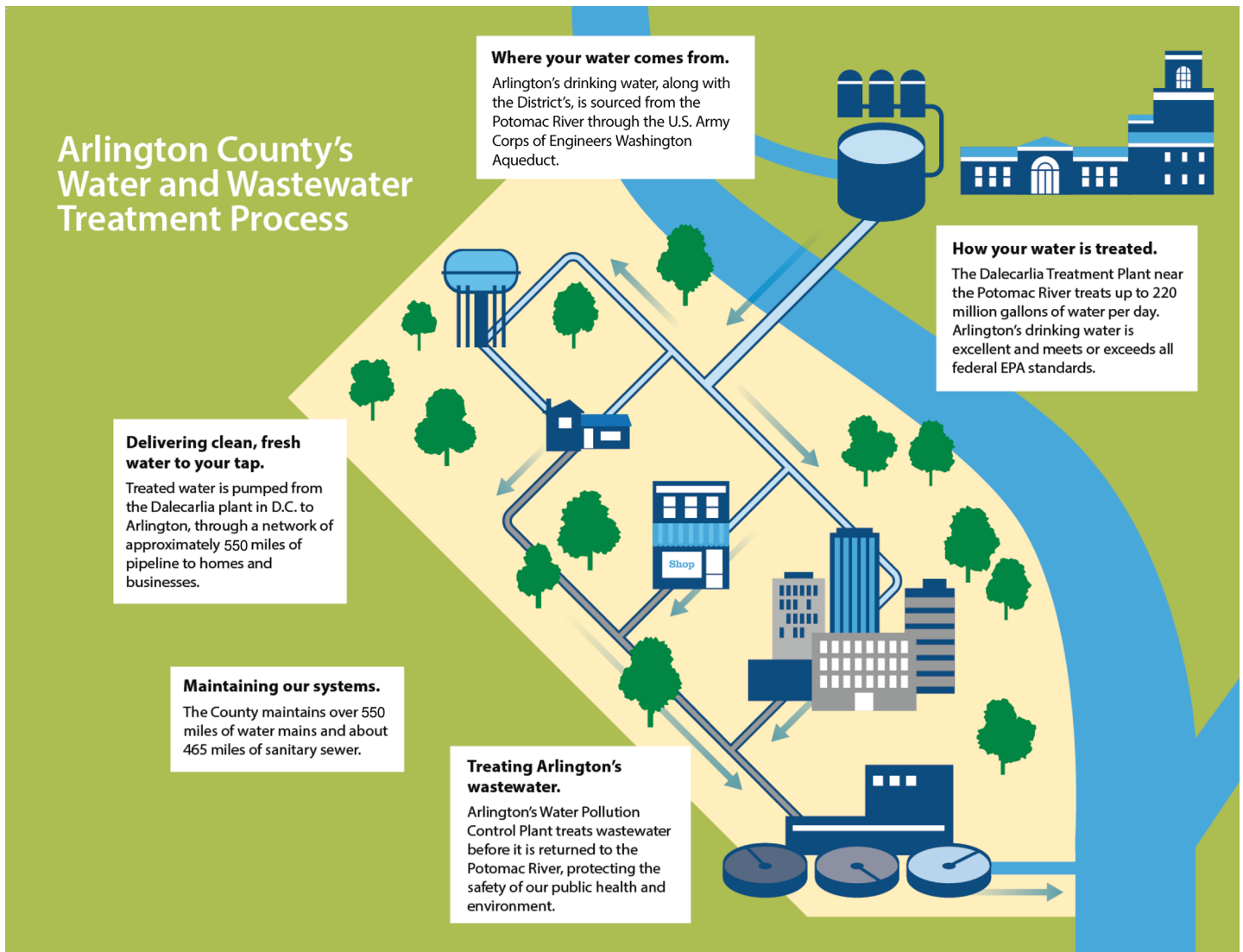


## DRINK UP!

The County delivered approximately 7.2 billion gallons of water in FY 2024. 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 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](https://bit.ly/ACWaterQuality).





# What's new in Arlington for utility customers?

## Increases Coming for Water-Sewer Rates



- Beginning July 1, 2025, residential customers will see slight increases in their quarterly billing rates for the new fiscal year.
- The base charge for water will increase from \$16.81 to \$16.82 per quarter, while the sewer base charge will rise from \$13.95 to \$13.98 per quarter. The sewer use rate will also increase from \$10.29 to \$10.48 per quarter.
- Find more utility rate information at [bit.ly/ACWaterSewerRates](https://bit.ly/ACWaterSewerRates).

# Earn or Recertify Your Stormwater Utility Credits for 2025

Have you taken steps to reduce stormwater runoff or pollution on your property in 2025? You can complete certain actions for this calendar year to obtain recertification or earn new credit(s) toward your 2026 Stormwater Utility bill.

**The application period will run from Nov. 1, 2025, through Jan. 31, 2026.** If you received an ongoing credit on your 2024 real property tax bill, you'll need to recertify your credit type during the application period. Credit applications must be submitted online using the County's Request Service/Report a Problem tool: [arlingtonva.us/Report-a-Problem](https://arlingtonva.us/Report-a-Problem).

Be sure to review the recertification process, as some voluntary actions require photos during the summer growing season. Refer to the Stormwater Utility Credit Manual for requirements related to new and renewal credits, available on the Stormwater Utility Fee webpage: [arlingtonva.us/stormwaterutility](https://arlingtonva.us/stormwaterutility). Questions? Send an email to [StormwaterUtility@arlingtonva.us](mailto:StormwaterUtility@arlingtonva.us).

	 Single-family Home, Townhome, or Duplex	 Multi-family and Non-Residential
Mandatory Structural (Mandated by Statute) Up to 15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stormwater facilities (LDA)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stormwater facilities (LDA)</li></ul>
Voluntary Actions 5% Each	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Conservation landscaping</li><li>Tree planting</li><li>Rainwater Collection and/or Redirection †</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Conservation landscaping</li><li>Tree planting</li><li>Stormwater education event</li><li>Storm drain marking</li></ul>
Voluntary Actions 10% Each	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Rain garden</li><li>Permeable driveway, patio, and/or other surfaces †</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Rain garden</li><li>Permeable parking lot/driveway †</li><li>Adopt-a-Street *</li><li>Stream clean-up *</li><li>Invasive plant removal *</li><li>Parking lot/private street sweeping</li></ul>
* Only these actions may be duplicated for up to 30% credit.		
† Existing actions are grandfathered in.		

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Complete Voluntary Activities for Credit	←											→												
Application Period											←	→												
Credit Applied to Bill																		★				★		

If a property owner completes voluntary credit actions during the calendar year, they must submit a credit application during the application period (Nov. 1 – Jan. 31). If the application is approved, the credits will reduce the Stormwater Utility fee on the two installment bills for the year after the credit actions were completed.

# Make Your Home Flood Resilient

Floods are the most common disaster in the United States and cost between \$180 to \$496 billion each year, according to a June 2024 report from the Congressional Joint Economic Committee. It's important to know your flood risk and take action to protect your home from flooding. Here are some tips to follow:

- **Know your flood risk.** Is your home or property located at the bottom of a hill or near a stream? Is there a pathway for water to safely flow off the property? What FEMA flood zone are you located in?
- **Install a sanitary sewer backflow valve** to prevent flooding from sewer backups.
- **Check for water entry points.** During flooding, water may enter through basement windows, basement stairwells, doors and dryer vents. Some of these can be protected with low walls or shields.

- **Consider elevating** or protecting equipment and appliances with flood walls or platforms.
- **Ensure you have a functioning sump pump.** Check the pump regularly, especially if it's more than 8 years old, and get a battery backup so it works in the event of a power outage.
- **Make an inventory of belongings.** Take photos of what you have stored in your basement and other parts of your home that may be at highest risk of flooding. Keep important documents and medications in waterproof containers.

Arlington County's Office of Sustainability and Environmental Management can help you determine if your property is in a floodplain or is affected by a mapped floodway or natural function, such as a wetland. We also encourage you to obtain insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program to be covered in the event of flooding.

Find more resources and learn how Arlington County is reducing flood risk at [arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Flooding](https://arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Flooding).

## 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 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.

## What Causes Breaks?

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

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

## 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 no matter the time. 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.

# 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 and valve replacement



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

## 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 hot-line at 703-228-6555 to report seeing water flowing in an unusual location. A crew is sent to investigate.

## 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 and remove air from the line. 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.



## 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 167 electric vehicles—which adds to Arlington's continued commitment to environmental sustainability.

## Lead in Drinking Water

Following the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 2021 Revised Lead and Copper Rule, Arlington County made an inventory of water service line material in our system. The inventory, conducted from February to September 2024, **found no lead service lines in the system**. This was completed using a combination of historical data, service line investigations, customer data and statistical analysis. More information can be found at [arlingtonva.us/Water-Service-Line-Inventory](https://arlingtonva.us/Water-Service-Line-Inventory).

Lead in drinking water results primarily from materials and components associated with service lines and home plumbing. When present, lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. Although our inventory found no lead service lines in Arlington County, you can take steps to identify the material of your home plumbing if you suspect you have a lead service line. Information on lead in drinking water, testing methods and steps you can take to minimize exposure is available at [epa.gov/safewater/lead](https://epa.gov/safewater/lead).

# 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

## 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 care. 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](https://bit.ly/ACStartStop)
- Customer Self Service Portal:  
[bit.ly/AC-CSS](https://bit.ly/AC-CSS)
- High Water Bill Adjustments Due to Leaks:  
[bit.ly/ACHighBills](https://bit.ly/ACHighBills)
- Customer Handbook:  
[bit.ly/ACCustomerHandbook](https://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](mailto:DESContactCenter@arlingtonva.us). Customer service reps are available Monday-Friday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

## 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 at no charge to you. Get more information about our Leak Adjustment Policy: [water.arlingtonva.us/customer-service/resolve-high-bills](https://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 replace your old toilet flapper if it is torn or worn.





# Project News

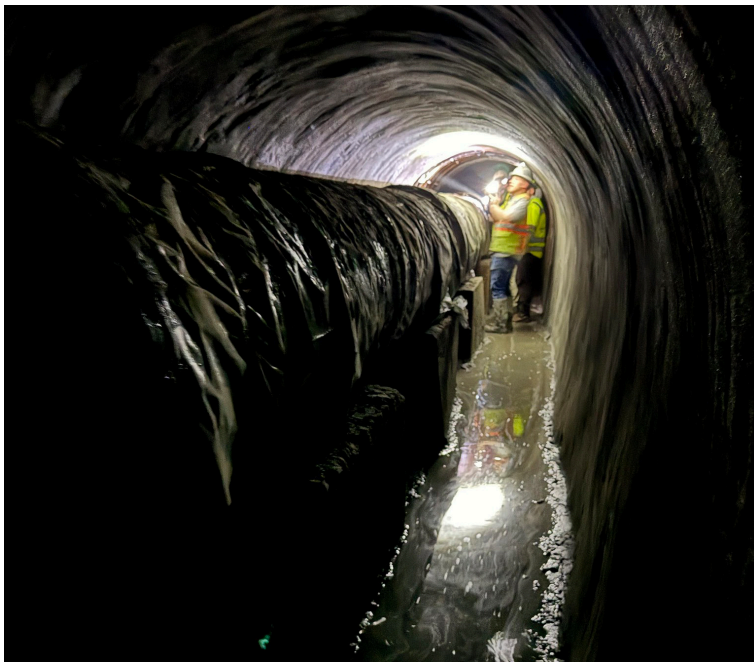
## County Rehabilitates Water Main Tunnel Under I-66

This spring, Arlington County contractor crews rehabilitated a large-diameter steel liner plate water main tunnel running beneath I-66 from the end of North Nelson Street toward Custis Trail to Hayes Park off North Lincoln Street. The purpose of the tunnel, built at the same time as I-66 in the mid-1980s, is providing access to the critical 36-inch water transmission main without digging up the interstate in the event of a repair.

The most recent inspection on the condition of the tunnel conducted in fall 2024 revealed that it was filled with groundwater, pointing to significant water infiltration in addition to corrosion. The rehabilitation work involved the following:

- Power washing the two access shafts and tunnel walls
- Vacuuming debris from the tunnel
- Pumping grout behind the shaft and tunnel walls in areas with significant groundwater infiltration
- Using a cementitious liner/spray mixed with polymer to structurally repair the tunnel from within and seal any cracks
- Replacing missing bolts and joint restraints on the 36-inch water transmission main while it was out of service

The rehabilitation work was completed in mid-June and will protect the integrity of the transmission main for the foreseeable future.



Inspection of I-66 water main tunnel during rehabilitation work.

## Construction for Arlington Re-Gen Starting Fall 2025

Arlington County's Water Pollution Control Bureau is preparing to embark on construction for the Arlington Re-Gen project this fall. Upgrades to its solids treatment facilities will create opportunities for sustainability and resource recovery. Upgrades completed in 2011 at the Water Pollution Control Plan addressed liquid treatment and reduced the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus discharged into County waters.

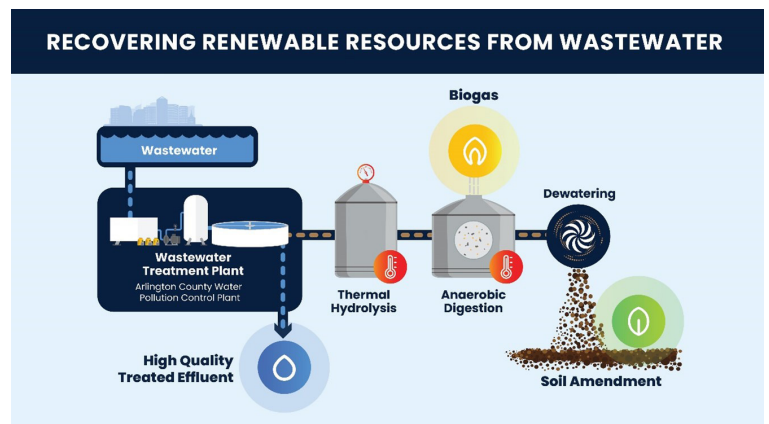
The solids-handling facilities will be improved to transform wastewater into renewable biogas and Class A biosolids (a nutrient-rich soil enhancer) using cutting-edge technology that applies heat and pressure to more efficiently break down wastewater residuals.

Re-Gen construction will take approximately four years, with the upgrades anticipated to be commissioned between 2029-2030.

Follow updates and find information about the Re-Gen upgrades at [arlingtonregen.com](https://arlingtonregen.com).



Water Pollution Control Plant in South Arlington.



Process to turn wastewater residuals into biogas and biosolids.

View the full annual water quality report, including the summary of 2024 water quality data, at: [bit.ly/ACWaterReports](https://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