Fall & Winter 2014

BELLEVUE UTILITIES

Are You Ready for the Rainy Season?

Once fall and winter rains come, you can rest easy if you've taken some steps to get ready. Follow the tips below…

- Remove leaves and debris from storm drains near your home. Clogged storm drains are often the reason for flooding.
- Clean gutters, downspouts, and cleanouts at your home at least twice a year.
- To prevent basement or crawlspace flooding, position downspouts away from property and consider extensions or troughs.
- Don't dump yard debris into streams, wetlands, or drainage ditches, because this can block water flow.
- If you own a sump pump, test it before a storm.
- Call Utilities at 425-452-7840 if you are having a drainage problem on your property. Although employees cannot work on private property, we can give you advice that may help your drainage issue. Also check the Drainage Around Your Home brochure at www.bellevuewa.gov/storm_and_surface_water.htm
- If an area floods, do not attempt to walk or drive through the area. Just six inches of water can knock you off your feet.
- Standard property insurance doesn't cover flooding. You may want to check with your insurance agent about getting flood insurance, which is available even if you don't live in a floodplain.
- If your house or office is in danger of flooding, call Utilities 24-hr emergency number at 425-452-7840.
- For more information about flooding, see www.floodsmart.gov
- To report power outages or down power lines, call Puget Sound Energy at 1-888-225-5773.
- Do not use gasoline-powered generators barbeques indoors or in a garage. Toxic fumes are dangerous. Use generators and barbeques outdoors.

Let us know what you think!

Please give us your feedback on this newsletter. Send your comments about the newsletter or any other Utilities issue to Utilities@bellevuewa.gov

At Your Service

Our water meter readers read about 1,100 meters in a regular work week, even during the rainy season. They also talk to customers about water leaks and other issues, maintain meter boxes, replace meters, and repair small leaks.

If you have an issue with your water meter, call Operations and Maintenance at 425-452-7840. To check for leaks, turn all water off in your home. Open the lid to your water meter. If the black or red triangle or silver gear is spinning, you probably have a leak.

Q&A

My husband says one location in Bellevue had a thousand-year rainfall this past summer. Is that true?

He's correct. On August 13, at the city's Coal Creek rain gauge, 2.65 inches of rain was recorded over just a six-hour period, which is the equivalent of a thousand-year storm. This means a rain storm of this intensity has only a 1 in 1000 chance of happening in any given year at a given location. Some of Bellevue's storm drain system is able to handle a hundred-year storm, but not a thousand year storm. We set a record, but it's not one we want to set again.

New Coal Creek Bridge Replaces 45-yr.-old Culvert

By the time you get this newsletter, the Coal Creek Parkway Bridge/ Culvert project should be nearly finished. The new bridge, which replaces a culvert that was no longer repairable, will keep the roadway safe for the 28,000 cars that use it daily. Pedestrians will be able to use the walkway under the bridge and view salmon as the fish migrate through the restored stream and new culvert. Hikers will be able to use the walkway connecting the Coal Creek trail. The complex project took almost a year and a half because of underground utilities, a PSE pipeline, and two Olympic pipelines that had to be safely moved. We appreciate your patience when four lanes were reduced to two and traffic slowed. We appreciate your continued patience as this major Utilities project winds down. Although all four lanes will be open most of the time beginning in October, occasional lane closures may occur during non-commute times for the city and private utilities to complete finishing work.

City of Bellevue Utilities

General Information	**425-452-6932**
Customer Service/Billing	**425-452-6973**
Drinking Water Quality	**425-452-6192**
Utilities Maintenance & 24 Hour Emergencies	**425-452-7840**

(flooding/water main breaks/no water/sewer overflows/ pollutant spills/hazardous road conditions)

Email: Utilities@bellevuewa.gov
Web: www.bellevuewa.gov/utilities.htm

Non-city phone numbers:

Republic Services *(Allied Waste)*	**425-452-4762**
Puget Sound Energy	**1-888-225-5773**

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What To Do if You Have a Wastewater Backup?

Give Utilities a Call

If you are experiencing a wastewater (sewer) backup at your home, call Bellevue Utilities Operations and Maintenance at 425-452-7840. Although by law we can't work on private property, one of our employees will call you back to help you assess the backup and determine if the blockage is in the city's wastewater pipes or your lateral sewer pipe.

Locating the problem

If the problem is in your sewer pipe, you will need to call a plumber. Utilities can bring out a map of your property, if needed, that shows where your sewer line is located. They will also check the work after it's done by a private company. If there is damage to your home, you should contact your insurance agent and a company that specializes in water clean up and restoration.

What causes wastewater backups?

Wastewater backups occur when a sewer pipe is clogged by debris. A clog often includes a buildup of fats, oil, grease (FOG), dirt, hair, bones, sanitary products, "flushable" wipes, paper towels, kitty litter, diapers, garbage, eggshells, coffee grounds and/or concrete. Tree roots and large shrub roots (such as laurel) can also cause backups. Tree roots are attracted to sewer lines because of nutrients and the warm temperature of water. Roots can creep into pipes and clog wastewater flow.

Helpful Tips

To prevent wastewater overflows and blockages:

- Never pour grease down sinks or toilets.
- Never flush anything other than toilet paper even though most wipes today say they are "flushable."
- Pour grease and oil into a can, store it in the freezer, and put it in the trash when full.
- Put food scraps in the Organics cart from Republic Services instead of your garbage disposal.

Wastewater pipe clogged with grease. Put grease and oil in a container and store it in the freezer. When full, put into the garbage.

Bellevue Utilities provides the following services: drinking water, wastewater, storm and surface water, and solid waste (garbage, recycling, and organics).