

Fall 2011

Board to hold public hearing

Important Rate Information

On Dec. 15, 2011, the Fairfax Water Board of Directors will hold a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. on the proposed revision to the Commodity Charge from \$2.04 to \$2.16 per 1,000 gallons, effective with meter readings taken on or after April 1, 2012. The public hearing will be held at Fairfax Water's main office at 8570 Executive Park Avenue in Fairfax. A copy of the proposed

changes and directions to the main office can be viewed at www.fairfaxwater.org/rates/index.htm. 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.

The proposed changes to the commodity charges, if approved, would increase the average household quarterly bill by \$2.88. Even with this increase, Fairfax Water's rates will remain the lowest in the Washington metropolitan region. To see a comparison of regional water rates, visit our Web site at www.fairfaxwater.org and click on Customer Service.

As a non-profit public utility, Fairfax Water is mandated to charge only for the actual cost of providing water service to our customers. Each year, the Board of Directors evaluates the actual cost of providing water

service, including any anticipated cost increases in goods and services and the cost to maintain

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The newly expanded Corbalis Plant



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Fairfax Water Finance Division

Dollars and Sense

What does the Finance Division do? What don't they do! This division supports every function and every customer on a daily basis. So, take a deep breath and here we go!

⇒ **Manage Fairfax Water's financial strategy**

Fairfax Water's financial strategy is established by the Board of Directors and managed on a day-to-day basis by the Finance Division. This includes projecting long-range funding needs, protecting our credit quality, and advising the Board on rate adjustments to minimize the impact of increasing operational costs and to prepare Fairfax Water for the long term.

⇒ **Prepare financial reports**

This division prepares all of our reports and data and makes sure the information is posted

correctly. Fairfax Water is audited annually by an independent auditor, using the reports and data prepared by the finance division.

⇒ **Manage purchasing and payments**

Did you know that Fairfax Water uses about 130 different types of belts, 102 different repair clamps, and about 97 types of plugs? Can you guess who manages the purchasing and payment for them and thousands of other products required to provide quality drinking water to your home?

Using Virginia procurement law and competitive bids, the procurement experts make sure we have what we need, even in emergencies. And their purchasing savvy has a little something to do with keeping our rates the lowest in the region!

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Rate Information *Cont. from page 1*

and expand our water system as needed to meet current and future demands. In recent years, Fairfax Water has experienced increases in the cost for fuel, power, chemicals, and construction materials that have far outpaced normal inflation.

Another challenge we face is planning for the future. At Fairfax Water, we have plans in place to meet water demands through 2040 and we're working on plans to ensure our distribution system remains strong through this century. This long-range planning allows us to make changes in our rates, fees, and charges in small increments to keep our system strong, which ensures we can expand as needed to meet water demands.

An example of this planning is the recent expansion of the James J. Corbalis Jr. Water Treatment Plant, which increased our water-treatment capabilities to meet customer demands through 2025. Improvements to our system over the past several years cost \$500 million, with another \$600 million anticipated over the next 10 years. Ongoing improvements include those at the Occoquan Dam, the Fox Mill water main, and the Penderwood water storage tank. To see photos of these projects, visit www.fairfaxwater.org and scroll down to "Check Out Our Recent Construction Photos!"

The following table compares the existing rates, fees and charges with the proposed revisions.

Charge	Current	Proposed
Availability Charge	\$3,600	\$3,700
Local Facilities Charge	\$8,500	\$9,000
Service Connection Charge	\$1,000	\$1,000
Account Charge	\$32	\$33
Quarterly Billing Service Charge	\$8.35	\$8.35*

Charge	Current	Proposed
Commodity Charge (per 1,000 gallons)	\$2.04	\$2.16**
Peak Use Charge (per 1,000 gallons)	\$2.95	\$3.20
Turn Off/Turn On Charge	\$46	\$46
Sewer Use Meters Charge	\$41	\$41
Returned Payment Charge	\$16	\$16

* Charges reflect fees associated with standard 5/8 " residential meter. Changes in charges for larger residential and commercial meters are reflected in the proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges.

** Fees for the use of Fairfax Water fire hydrants would also change to include the proposed increase in the Commodity Charge and Peak Use Charge.

Celebrate Fairfax! attendees celebrated with Fairfax Water



One of the most popular places during the Celebrate Fairfax! festival was the Fairfax Water booth. During the festival, Fairfax Water provided more than 20,000 cups of ice cold water to hot and tired fair goers. That's more than 20,000 plastic bottles kept out of the trash! Here's a special thank you to all those who visited our booth and helped us keep our county green!



Resources for Students

Helping our customers learn more about water is important here at Fairfax Water. To accomplish this goal, we offer a variety of educational programs and resources.

Learning Online

Fairfax County Public Schools has listed our Web site - www.fairfaxwater.org - as a curriculum resource for teachers, and you, too, can use our resources. Just click on *Educational Resources* on our homepage and find a variety of activities, lessons, and fun for children of all ages. There are links to online e-books about the water treatment process, the water cycle, watersheds, and the story of drinking water. Visit the "For Kids" and "For Teachers and Parents" pages for lesson plans, experiments, and activities from pre-school to high school.

Student Project Programs

Fairfax Water offers assistance to students pursuing science-fair projects related to drinking water. Opportunities are available for Fairfax County students to work in the laboratory with a trained water-quality analyst. To learn more about the program, visit www.fairfaxwater.org, click on Educational Resources, and then Student Project Program, or call 703-289-6550, TTY 711.

Students can also submit questions about or ask for assistance with science-fair projects related to water quality and the water treatment process via e-mail to studentprojects@fairfaxwater.org. Be sure to include contact information in your e-mail - and don't wait until the last minute to ask for help! 💧

Dollars and Sense Cont. from page 1

The accounting staff, using the new enterprise system and a sound policy of checks and balances, ensures that invoices are accurate and payments are made appropriately. They also manage our incoming payments, keeping wholesale, commercial and residential accounts updated and making sure that other payments are made promptly.

⇒ Provide customer service

The customer service staff is our direct connection to you. These folks answer the phones to help customers start or stop their service, answer questions, and assist with problems. They manage the billing process. You'll see customer service workers in the neighborhood reading meters - about 240,000 every quarter - and also repairing or replacing them. And they'll help you to figure out if you have a water leak and whether it is in your household plumbing or in our system. They even make house calls!



So now it's probably very clear that nothing happens at Fairfax Water without the help of the Finance Division. And everything they help with is better for it! 💧

Drop & Dino star in
The Water Cycle



Glad You Asked!

Q. Just read the Winter 2010/2011 edition of *From the Tap*. The suggestions were good ones, especially the one about knowing the location of the main-line valve. In one of your future bill mailings you may want to include an identifying tag that can be hung on the valve.

A. What a great idea! Since we aren't able to include a tag with our bills because it would significantly increase our postage costs, we've put the tag on our Web site at www.fairfaxwater.org to download and print, or you can request a copy by calling 703-289-6019, TTY 711.

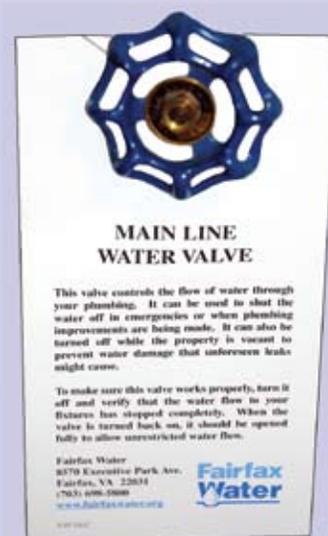
Your main-line water valve is normally located where the water line enters your home through the foundation. You can use it to shut off the water in an emergency or when you are making plumbing improvements. To make sure this valve works properly, turn it off and verify that the water flow to your fixtures has stopped completely. When the valve is turned back on, it should be opened fully to allow unrestricted water flow. Be sure to show everyone in your home where the valve is and how to turn it off.

Here are a few more tips to help keep your pipes warm and cozy all winter:

- ◆ Make sure you know where the valves are for your outside spigots. That way, when freezing weather is forecast, you can easily turn off the water to the outside spigots.
- ◆ Never try to thaw frozen pipes with an open flame or torch.
- ◆ If you will be away from home for an extended period, keep the thermostat at a reasonable temperature to protect pipes from freezing.
- ◆ You can learn about where Fairfax Water's system ends and your home plumbing begins by visiting our Web site at www.fairfaxwater.org. Click on "Customer Service" and then "Your Plumbing."

◆ If you suspect you have a frozen water meter, call us for help. Do not attempt to thaw the water meter yourself as this can result in extensive damage. Our service crews are available 24 hours a day and will respond as soon as possible. You can reach our Customer Service Department at 703-698-5800, TTY 711 during normal business hours. After normal business hours, the emergency number is 703-698-5613, TTY 711. 💧

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





We Want to Know...

If you have comments or suggestions about this publication, please e-mail us at pr@fairfaxwater.org, call us at 703-698-5600, or write to the address below:

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

Important Numbers

Fairfax Water Services

Questions about water service:
703-698-5800
After-hours water emergencies:
703-698-5613
To report a water main break:
703-698-5613 or send an e-mail to watermainbreak@fairfaxwater.org.
Questions about billing:
703-698-5800
All other Fairfax Water departments:
703-698-5600

Fairfax County Services

24-hour trouble-response center for sewer back-ups or sluggish flow in a sink, toilet, or tub: 703-323-1211
Sanitary sewer back-ups and line maintenance: 703-250-2003

Dig with C.A.R.E.

Miss Utility at 1-800-552-7001 or 811

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

KIDS' CORNER

Word Scramble

put the letters in the right order to finish the sentence!

All living things need _____ to live.
t a w e r

Less than 1% of all the water on earth is _____ water.
s e f r h

We _____ water in liquid form.
i k r d n

You'll save water by taking a quick _____.
h o w s e r

When water evaporates, it travels into the air and becomes part of a _____.
d l o c u

Wash bikes and cars with a _____ and sponge instead of running the hose.
k e c b u t

Ask your _____ to look for ways to save water.
m f a i y l



The Science Guy

Source: The Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, [www.epa.gov/safewater.gov](http://www.epa.gov/safewater)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Mon., Sept. 5

Fairfax Water offices closed for Labor Day.

Sat., Sept. 10

Household Hazardous Waste Event www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/trash/disphhw.htm or 703-324-5068, TTY 711.

Mon., Oct. 10

Fairfax Water offices closed for Columbus Day.

Sun., Sept. 25, Oct. 23, Nov. 20

Electric Sunday Recycling Events. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/recycling/electric-sunday.htm or 703-324-5230, TTY 711.

Fri., Nov.11

Fairfax Water offices closed for Veterans Day.

Thurs. & Fri., Nov. 24 & 25

Fairfax Water offices closed for Thanksgiving.

Fri., Dec. 23 at noon & Mon., Dec. 26

Fairfax Water offices closed for Christmas.

Mon., Jan. 2

Fairfax Water offices closed for New Year's Day.



Water-Saving Tip

Plant during the spring or fall when the watering requirements are lower. Reduce the amount of grass in your yard by planting shrubs, and using rock and granite mulch. For more information and water-saving tips, visit www.wateruseitwisely.com.



Fairfax Water is a public, non-profit water authority serving nearly 1.7 million people in the Northern Virginia communities of Fairfax, Loudoun, Prince William, Fort Belvoir, Herndon, Dulles, and Alexandria.