



What if there's a huge leak and you've got to shut off the water — fast?

Every member of your household should know where and how to shut off water BEFORE an emergency happens.

Do you know how?

YOUR MAIN SHUT-OFF VALVE

Everyone should take time to find their main water shut-off valve. If a pipe bursts, an extra two minute delay can result in 30 or more gallons of spilled water. Being able to find the shut-off valve quickly can save you from costly damage to your home. Many homes have the water meter and the shut-off valve grouped together. The water meter is located near the street with a turf box, covering the shut off valve, next to it. To turn off this valve, simply open the lid and turn the handle in the clockwise direction. The shut-off valve can also be a wheel-shaped handle in the ground, immediately adjacent to the house and near the front outside faucet. If it is buried deeply, dig around the valve and place a turf box on it so you can find it easily in an emergency.

If you cannot find the main shut-off valve to your home, have a local plumber help locate or install one for you.

INSIDE VALVES

You may also have valves on appliances and fixtures, such as the water heater, washing machine and toilet. Turn these valves on and off from time to time so that they will be ready to use if a water emergency occurs.

TURN OFF YOUR MAIN SHUT-OFF VALVE

... when you have a water break/problem in the house. Being able to turn off the water quickly will decrease the chances of major water damage inside your home.

... if you're going to be gone for an extended period of time. Turning off the water to your house can prevent unexpected leaks that could increase your water bill or cause damage while you are gone. Remember to turn off all electrical appliances that use water, such as water heaters, so that they do not create a safety hazard if they lose water.

... prior to a hurricane evacuation. Turning off your water prior to evacuation helps you and BJWSA. Not only will it eliminate additional damage to your home, it will also prevent a loss of water in the system during a critical time. By turning off your main water valve, you will help in maintaining and restoring the system pressure as soon as possible. This will allow people to return to their homes sooner.

WHAT IS THAT PINK STUFF ON MY BATHROOM FIXTURES?

That "pink stuff" that you may be seeing around your sink drains or in your toilets is naturally occurring airborne bacteria that has nothing to do with the quality of your water. These bacteria thrive on moisture, dust, and phosphates. Once airborne, these bacteria seek moist environments to grow. Always keep bathtubs and sinks wiped down and dry.

The best solution to curtail the onset of these bacteria is continual cleaning with a cleaning solution that contains chlorine. Use care with abrasives to avoid scratching fixtures,

which will make them even more susceptible to bacteria. Three to five tablespoons of chlorine bleach can be periodically stirred into the toilet tank and flushed in to the bowl itself. Cleaning and flushing with chlorine will not necessarily eliminate the problem, but will help control the bacteria growth. If you have a septic tank, use a non-chlorine cleaner, such as borax, to avoid damaging your septic system.





How We Read Your Water Meter

To ensure that you are billed for the correct amount of water used by your household, organization, or business, BJWSA uses an extremely accurate radio-based water meter reading system. With this system, BJWSA employees read meters by driving a specially equipped truck down the street. Your meter has a radio signal that sends water usage information to a receiver on the truck as it drives through the area. This information is stored and used for your billing.

It is important that you help protect your water meter. If the meter equipment is damaged, the person who has the account with BJWSA may be held responsible for repairs or replacement. The electronic equipment in the meter boxes can withstand weather and other environmental conditions. However, the meter equipment is sensitive and cannot withstand tinkering, tampering or mishandling. The system will alert BJWSA if the meter has been tampered with since the last reading.

If you notice any damaged meter equipment in your neighborhood, please let BJWSA know immediately. For more information, contact BJWSA at (843) 987-9292.

A Reminder

When working in your community, we sometimes mark the water and sewer lines with small flags so they will not be damaged. **Please do not remove the flags so the work can be completed safely and without service interruptions.**

Are Your Pipes Fat-Free?

Fats, oils, and greases aren't just bad for hearts and waistlines—they mean trouble for sewer pipelines, too. When washed down the sink, grease sticks to the insides of sewer pipes on your property and the pipelines in the street. It can build up, harden into a plug, and block an entire pipe, causing sewer overflows and backups.

Grease from cooking—meat fats, lard, oil, shortening, butter, margarine, food scraps, baking goods, sauces and dairy products—should NEVER be put down any drain.

You can help protect your home from sewer backups and overflows:

- Scrape grease and food scraps into a can or the trash for disposal (or recycling where available).
- Don't put grease down a home garbage disposal or use detergent to wash grease down the drain. Detergents—even those that claim to dissolve grease—may pass the grease down the pipeline and cause problems elsewhere. Pour grease and oil into a can, store it in the freezer and put it in the trash when it's full.
- Whenever you have a greasy pan to wash, wipe it out after use (while it's still warm, not hot) with newspaper or paper towel.
- Encourage your friends and neighbors to keep grease out of drains.

If you are a restaurant or building owner:

- Recycle grease and oil.
- Don't pour grease or oil into sinks, floor drains, or onto a parking lot or street.
- Use a grease trap or interceptor that is designed, installed and maintained correctly.
- Never put solids into grease traps or interceptors.
- Check and maintain grease traps and interceptors regularly.



Water Saving Device #1

Grab a wrench and fix that leaky faucet. You can save 20 gallons or more per day.



Water Saving Device #2

Put food coloring in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the toilet bowl, you have a leak. Fix that leak and save more than 600 gallons a month.



Water Saving Device #3

Time your showers. A short shower is a huge water saver.



Water Saving Device #4

If your shower can fill a gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, change to a water-efficient showerhead.



Water Saving Device #5

Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap for cold drinks so that every drop goes down you, not the drain.

Who Do You Go to With Plumbing Problems?

If you discover a leak on your property, you must decide whether to call a plumber or BJWSA. BJWSA is responsible for the pipelines that bring water to your property and take water away, along with a meter that precisely measures your water usage. Your responsibility, as the property owner, begins on the property side of the water meter.

BJWSA cannot search for or repair plumbing problems on private property. If the problem is at the meter, BJWSA will replace or repair it. If the meter is not involved, you should contact a plumber to determine the problem. BJWSA will be glad to provide information to assist you in detecting plumbing problems. If you have a water emergency and you cannot locate the shut-off valve to your home (see cover article), BJWSA will shut off your water at the water meter for a service call fee.

NewsSPLASH



A quarterly publication of the Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority

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Need More Information?

Contact Jerrie Legare, BJWSA Communications Manager at 987-9213 or jerriel@bjwsa.org.





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High Speed Emergency Notification Now in Place

Getting information out fast to customers is vital to public health and safety during situations such as hurricane recovery and critical water emergencies. BJWSA can now deliver pre-recorded telephone messages to individuals and answering machines in the entire BJWSA service area at a rate of up to 60,000 calls per hour. Through our contract with a Florida-based company, we are using CodeRED, a very cost-effective computerized system that requires no setup fees or purchase of phone lines or equipment.

CodeRED is a geographical based notification system, which means street addresses are needed to select which phone numbers will receive emergency notification calls in any given situation. CodeRED automatically includes residential phone numbers from the BJWSA customer database.

WHAT DOES A NOTICE LOOK LIKE?

If you see 9999119999 on your telephone caller ID, you are receiving an emergency notice from BJWSA. Calls will average 30 to 35 seconds.

Are You Registered?

Businesses, cell phone users, residents with unlisted numbers or anyone who has changed their phone number or address within the last year should register their numbers by logging onto the BJWSA website, www.bjwsa.org. Click on the CodeRED logo under the navigation menu on BJWSA's home page. We also encourage you to register if you need hearing impaired service. **All information will only be used for emergency notification purposes.**