

DID YOU KNOW?

New Water Policy Changes Starting in 2024

Skagit PUD recently changed sections of its water policy, which may affect your account.

We understand that life can be full of surprises, and sometimes, customers may find it challenging to pay their bills on time. We want you to know that Skagit PUD supports you during such occasions. Please note that if your statements have unpaid balances exceeding the due date by 14 calendar days, we may charge a late fee of \$10 or 1% per month, whichever is greater.

However, by contacting our Customer Service team, we can waive the late fee on your account if you haven't incurred any late payment, reversal, or fee in the previous 12 months and/or you agree to enroll in autopay.

Moreover, we thank you for being a valuable customer. If you've had a good credit history with us over the

past 12 months, you may be eligible for a deposit refund or credit to your account upon request. We believe

that maintaining a satisfactory credit rating, which means no late fees, NSF fees, or late payments, is a noteworthy accomplishment, and we want to acknowledge and reward you for it.

Our goal is to make your experience with us as seamless and convenient as possible, and we are committed to working with you to achieve that.



Don't Let Cold Weather Catch You Unprepared This Winter

Every winter, many homeowners face the expense and inconvenience of frozen water pipes. But you can cross that off your list of winter worries by taking a few simple precautions.

Disconnect and drain outdoor hoses. Detaching the hose allows water to drain from the pipe. Otherwise, a single hard, overnight freeze can burst either the faucet or the pipe it's connected to.



Insulate pipes or faucets in unheated areas. If you have pipelines in an unheated garage or cold crawl space beneath the house, wrap the water pipes before temperatures plummet. Hardware or building supply stores have good pipe wrapping and materials available.

Consider installing "heat tape" or similar materials on exposed water pipes. These are relatively easy to install, and hardware or building supply stores have many

brands to fit almost any need. Use only UL-listed products and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.

Seal off access doors, air vents, and cracks. Repair broken basement windows. Winter winds whistling through overlooked openings can quickly freeze exposed water pipes. However, don't plug air vents your furnace or water heater needs for good combustion.

Keep the heat on. If you're going to be away from home for an extended period, make sure your thermostat is not set lower than 55 degrees.

[COLD WEATHER > SEE BACK PAGE](#)

Can you hear your toilet running?

It might be time to fetch a new toilet flapper.

Replace your flapper in just six steps:

1. Turn off the water to your toilet
2. Remove tank cover and flush
3. Remove old flapper
4. Attach new flapper to pegs
5. Reattach/adjust chain for a tight seal
6. Turn water on and flush



Don't Let Cold Weather Catch You Unprepared This Winter

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Allow the faucet to drip. A dripping faucet relieves pressure on your home's water system. You can leave on only one dripping faucet, but you want to ensure it's in the right location. If you know where your water comes into

your house, turn on a cold water faucet at the other end of the house to allow for water to travel through the entire system.

Find the master shutoff. It's most likely where the

water line comes into your house from the street. If it's not there, it may be near the water heater or the washing machine. If a pipe bursts anywhere in the house —



kitchen, bath, basement, or crawl space — this valve turns it off. So, find it now and paint it a bright red color or hang a tag on it. Be sure everyone in the house knows where it is and what it does.

Capital Projects Remain 2024 Focus

Access to clean, safe water is essential for our economy, health, and lifestyle. Our community relies on this valuable resource and the infrastructure that connects, protects, and supports it.

To maintain and replace existing assets while ensuring clean and reliable drinking water, Skagit PUD has proposed an overall rate increase of 5% or \$6.82 per billing cycle for the typical residential customer in 2024, with the high consumption tiers at a greater rate. The proposed rates would increase the average customer's two-month bill to \$142.15, with 60% of the bill going towards funding capital improvement projects.

"The new rates will increase projected water revenues by almost \$1.6 million in 2024," Finance Manager Brian Henshaw said.

"The revenue will fund the Capital Improvement Plan and related debt service."

Henshaw anticipates that capital contributions and non-operating revenue may be lower next year "as the economy struggles with inflation, higher interest rates, supply chain issues, and economic uncertainty."

Based on the updated capital plan for the 2024 budget, there are projects planned totaling \$102 million over the next 10 years. "Next year's significant capital projects include several fish passage projects, pipeline replacement projects, continued work on the PUD's campus, and several projects at the Water Treatment Plant," Henshaw said.

The proposed rate increases would take effect for all bills generated on January 1 and thereafter. A copy of the 2024 proposed budget is available online at SkagitPUD.org.

What if it's too late?

What if you wake up one day to find the pipes are frozen anyway? During an extended cold spell, it could happen despite precautions.

If you think you know where the freeze-up occurred and want to try thawing it out yourself, don't under any circumstances use a torch with an open flame! The whole house could catch fire. Also, overheating a single spot can burst the pipe. Heating a soldered joint could allow it to leak or come completely apart.

The easiest tool is probably a hair dryer with a low heat setting. Wave the warm air back and forth along the pipe, not in one spot. If you don't have a hair dryer, you can wrap the frozen section with rags or towels and pour hot water over them. It's messy, but it works.



Be careful because the pipe may already be broken. It's not leaking because the water is frozen. But, when you thaw it out, water could come gushing out. Be ready to run for the master shutoff valve if necessary.

Breakdown of Average Residential Bi-Monthly Bill

12 Hundred Cubic Feet (8,976 gallons) of Water Every Two Months

