

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Shower vs. Bath

Which uses more water, a shower or a tub bath? It all depends. A partially filled tub uses much less than a long shower, while a short shower is much more water-efficient than a brimful tub. If you shower in a bathtub, check yourself by plugging the tub to see how high the water comes when you're finished. Do you use more or less than that amount when you take a bath?



### Summer Lawn Mowing Tips

Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting. The grass blades will grow longer and shade one another and the ground, helping to fight off heat and hold moisture longer.



Mow the lawn often, at least once a week. Try to cut no more than one-third of the grass blade, removing about one-half to three-quarters of an inch at a time. If you mow the grass shorter than this, excessive shock occurs, causing the grass to turn yellow despite your best sprinkling efforts.

### Shorter Showers?

If everyone in the United States could use just one less gallon of water per shower daily, we could save some 85 billion gallons per year. How do you do it? Keep the shower pressure lower, or make your showers a few seconds shorter.

## Water Quality is Job No. 1 Making Sure Your Water is Safe to Drink Every Day

EVERY TIME YOU TURN ON the tap in your home, you receive one of the world's most precious commodities — fresh, clean drinking water. At Skagit PUD, we are committed to providing you with the safest and most reliable drinking water possible at an affordable price.

We ensure safety by continually monitoring and testing your water for potential contaminants. For example, the Judy Reservoir system serves 85,000 people in the Burlington, Mount Vernon, and Sedro-Woolley areas. Our Water Quality staff collects 100 water samples each month to check for total coliforms and E. coli bacteria. Total coliforms include bacteria found in the soil, in water influenced by surface water, and in human or animal waste. Most E. coli are harmless and essential to a healthy human intestinal tract. However, some E. coli are pathogenic, meaning they can cause either diarrhea or illness outside the intestinal tract. The types of E. coli that can cause diarrhea can be transmitted through contaminated water.

Depending on the monitoring schedule provided by the Washington State Department



Skagit PUD provides customers with a report showing how our water quality meets federal and state drinking water standards.

of Health, Skagit PUD also tests for various other contaminants, including pesticides, lead and copper, disinfectant by-products, and a host of different chemicals.

Because Skagit PUD maintains over 630 miles of pipeline throughout the county, we want to ensure the water leaving the treatment plant is safe and that it's safe for the last customer in the distribution system.



Water Treatment Plant Operator Jim Owen checks the raw water entering the plant.

Part of our testing protocol is to monitor the chlorine level of each sample. A sufficient level of chlorine remaining in water after its initial application ensures we kill any bacteria that may enter the pipelines.

"Chemical reactions are still taking place from the moment the water leaves the treatment plant until it reaches your house,"



Water Quality Coordinator Emilia Blake manages the lab at the Judy Reservoir Water Treatment Plant.

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# Water Quality is Job No. 1

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Water Quality Coordinator Emilia Blake explained. "If there is a main break, bacteria can get in."

Skagit PUD provides its customers with an annual Consumer Confidence Report to show them how our water quality stacks up against established federal and state drinking water standards. We encourage you to review this report as it details the source and quality of the drinking water delivered to your community.

To view the reports, visit <https://www.skagitpud.org/customers/water-quality/water-quality-standards/consumer-confidence-reports>. If you wish to have a paper copy, you can print one directly from our website or receive a printed version by contacting our Water Quality department at (360) 848-2135.



2023 Water Quality Report

## Protecting Smaller System Wellhead Areas

To ensure the safety of the drinking water supply for the customers of Alger, Cedargrove, Marblemount, Potlatch, Rockport, and Skagit View Village water systems, Skagit PUD has developed a wellhead protection program as required by state law. As part of this program, the PUD has mapped the area that overlies the short-term recharge zone of our drinking water supply wells. This area is known as the wellhead protection area.

In order to protect the drinking water supply for these communities, the PUD has also conducted an inventory of potential groundwater contamination sources within the wellhead protection area. If your business is located within this area, your activities could have an impact on the drinking water supply.

If you need technical assistance to ensure that your business operations do not affect the groundwater in the wellhead protection area, please contact the Skagit County Natural Resources Department at (360) 416-1320.

We understand that most businesses already take environmental protection seriously, and we hope that being aware of your location in a wellhead protection area will encourage you to take further precautions to prevent any impact on drinking water quality.

## Tips for Using Water Wisely in Your Yard This Summer

Outdoors is a great place to focus on water conservation. Landscape watering consumes the greatest percentage of outdoor water, whether a traditional lawn, shrubs, or garden. Thankfully, there is a lot you can do to cut down on landscape watering. The following tips can help reduce water use and ensure a healthy, beautiful yard.

### Water Effectively

- Water only when needed. One inch of water a week, including rainfall, is all your lawn needs.
- Match sprinklers to the area being watered to avoid watering streets and driveways.
- Water in the early morning or evening to reduce evaporation.
- Install drip irrigation or soaker hoses in your garden areas. These provide a slow, steady supply of water to the root zone.
- Use watering timers that automatically shut off sprinklers.
- Collect rainwater in a barrel and use it



Water hose timer

to water non-edible plants. **Skagit PUD makes and sells rain barrels for \$65.**

### Improve Soil

- Improve your soil by adding compost. Compost increases the ability of soil to hold water.
- Apply surface mulch (organic matter) around plants, which reduces evaporation.
- Aerate your lawn annually if you have compacted soil. Aeration allows water to get to the roots.

### Plant Smart

- Use native, water-wise plants. These plants require less water and less care.
- Match plants to your yard conditions. Many plants die because they are planted in the wrong location.
- Group plants according to water needs. Grouping makes watering much more efficient.
- Plant in the spring or fall when watering requirements are lower.
- Minimize the amount of lawn. Lawns require at least twice as much water as most plants.