



# Splash

Metro Water  
Newsletter  
Summer 2020

## Inside the Summer 2020 Issue:

COVID-19 and Your Water .....	1
Promise Kept, RTA Fee Sunsets This Year .....	2
High Water Use Notification .....	3
Water Quality Reports .....	3
Spotlight on Metro Southwest .....	4
Location, Contact Information & Business Hours .....	4
Holiday Office Closures .....	4
Board of Directors & Board Meeting Schedule .....	4

## COVID-19 AND YOUR WATER

The last few months have presented countless COVID-19 related challenges including health, well-being, financial uncertainty, and even toilet paper. One element that you may not have paused to reflect on is the safety and reliability of your water during this pandemic. The District has implemented numerous protocols to ensure continued deliveries of safe, reliable water to you, while also protecting the health of our water professionals and the public. To highlight some of these initiatives, below are answers to the most common questions our customers have asked since this pandemic began.

### IS MY WATER SAFE?

Yes, COVID-19 does not impact the quality of your water. According to the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, conventional water treatment disinfection used by the District should remove or inactivate the virus that causes COVID-19. The District has also been proactive in implementing preventative measures to minimize the exposure risk to staff and customers.

### WHAT IF I CANNOT PAY MY BILL?

On March 13th, the District ceased turning off customers for lack of payment. We have advised customers that if they are unable to pay their full bill, paying even a portion will reduce the total amount owed in a post-COVID environment.

### IS CUSTOMER SERVICE AVAILABLE DURING THIS TIME?

Yes, our Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) continue to address customer inquiries. To enhance social distancing, over half of our CSRs are working from home but are still able to provide the same level of customer service as if they were in the office.

During this pandemic, we are able to address customer calls from 7:30 AM – 4:00 PM Monday through Thursday and 7:00 AM – noon on Friday. We continue to keep the lobby open to the public as the District's lobby serves multiple purposes including accepting deliveries, pick-up and drop off of water quality samples, and to provide service to the infrequent walk-in customer. Increased disinfection of customer service counters has been implemented and both the walk-in lobby and drive-up window are open 7:30 AM – 2:30 PM Monday through Thursday and 7:00 AM – noon on Friday.

*Continued on Page 2*



*Continued from Page 1*

### **IF THE OFFICE IS NOT SHUT DOWN, HOW ARE YOU PROTECTING STAFF?**

A number of proactive measures have been implemented including:

- Incorporating telework rotations for most administrative, technical and professional staff, as well as split scheduling for field employees.
- Reconfiguring employee work areas to provide additional separation and utilizing remote meeting platforms.
- Implementing increased janitorial cleaning and sanitizing of work areas.
- Utilizing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to minimize the cross-exposure risk in instances when staff cannot maintain social distancing, such as during a main break where more than one staff member is required to accomplish the repair.

### **ARE YOU STILL HOLDING BOARD MEETINGS OR STAFF MEETINGS?**

Board Meetings have been held remotely using GoToMeeting and chairs were spaced in the Board Room for anyone wishing to attend in person. Remote meetings are also being used for meetings with consultants and others. Any in-person meeting that has been held over the past two months has been limited to the smallest group necessary, and social distancing has been maintained.

During this turbulent pandemic, staff across all teams have demonstrated agility to changing situations, innovativeness to create new ways to accomplish core tasks with the COVID-19 related new constraints, and have maintained their focus on achieving the District mission. If you have any additional questions regarding actions we have taken in response to COVID-19, please do not hesitate to contact us at 520-575-8100 or [info@metrowater.com](mailto:info@metrowater.com). ♦



---

---

## **PROMISE KEPT, RTA FEE SUNSETS THIS YEAR**

At the May 11, 2020, Rate Hearing, the Board of Directors concurred with the conclusion of the \$3.00 monthly Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Fee on December 31, 2020. The Board also unanimously supported the creation of an Infrastructure Rehabilitation Fee and adjusting deposit amounts for new customer accounts. The District's Finance Oversight Committee previously voted unanimously for the Board to consider approving the proposed adjustments to fees.

The District maintains water infrastructure, to recover water from the aquifer, disinfect and pump the water to one of our storage facilities, and then conveying this water to you. Between all the service areas, we have over 15 million gallons of storage, approximately 400 miles of water line, two thousand fire hydrants, and 8,000 valves.

To ensure continued and stable investment in the District's water infrastructure, the creation of an Infrastructure Rehabilitation Fee of 95¢/month for the standard residential customer was approved to begin January 2021. As this fee goes into effect after the conclusion of the RTA fee, customers in Metro Main and Hub will see a \$2.05 decrease in their monthly water bill. As the RTA fee did not exist in the Metro Southwest service areas, the Southwest customers will see less than a dollar increase in the average monthly water bill.

Staff also recommended an increase to the customer deposit amounts that new customers will pay when setting up a District account. The new deposit amount will be \$132 for new residential customers and is intended to protect District residents from subsidizing delinquent accounts.

**Continued from Page 2**

On May 5, 2020, the District held its annual Information Meeting to provide customers with an opportunity to learn more about the District's proposed rates and fees and to ask questions regarding the District. This year due to COVID-19, the information meeting was held in the Board Room if customers wished to attend in person, while maintaining social distancing, as well as via GoToMeeting.

Thank you for your continued support of the District's initiatives to continue to deliver safe, reliable water while maintaining a stable financial position for the District.

**RATES IN PERSPECTIVE – HISTORICAL RATE INCREASES**

**Metro Main & Hub**

Fiscal Year	%
2017	5.1%
2018	0%
2019	1.5%
2020	1.9%
2021	-4.1%

An average annual increase of less than 1% over the past five years (half inflation rate)

**Metro Southwest Lazy B**

Fiscal Year	%
2017	1.1%
2018	0%
2019	1.1%
2020	1.6%
2021	1.7%

An average annual increase of approximately 1% over the past five years (half inflation rate)

**Metro Southwest Diablo Village**

Fiscal Year	%
2017	3.8%
2018	0%
2019	1.3%
2020	2.3%
2021	2.3%

An average annual increase of only 1.9% over the past five years (less than inflation rate)

**Metro Southwest E&T**

Fiscal Year	%
2017	5.3%
2018	0%
2019	1.8%
2020	2.4%
2021	2.4%

An average annual increase of 2.4% over the past five years (comparative to inflation)

**HIGH WATER USE NOTIFICATION**

**M**etro Water District will be notifying customers about higher than normal water usage with an automated voice and text messaging system. You will still hear the voice of a District employee, and the District will use the same process we are currently using to identify higher than normal water usage, with automated courtesy notifications. If you receive a notification and do not know why additional water went through your meter, you can call the office during normal business hours to talk to a Customer Service Representative.

**P**lease make sure the phone number on your Metro Water District account is updated so you do not miss any important notifications. If you receive a text and prefer not to receive a text message, you may "OPT OUT" any time and future messages will be directed to your telephone. If you have any questions please contact customer service at 520-575-8100. 💧



## WATER QUALITY REPORTS 2019

The annual Water Quality Reports are available to view and print from the Metro Water District website at [metrowater.com](http://metrowater.com). Please call us at 575-8100 or visit our office at 6265 N. La Cañada Drive if you would like to receive a paper copy.

We believe that customers who are well informed about their water supply are our best allies in supporting improvements necessary for safe and reliable water. 💧





**Eric Gaytan, Utility Technician II, Bobby Martinez, Utility Technician III, and Cory Bott, Utility Supervisor, installed a pressure reducing valve at the Northeast booster station to enhance system reliability in the Metro Main Service Area. 💧**



## SPOTLIGHT ON METRO SOUTHWEST



**Chris Soto, Industrial Electrician, is seen here installing an antenna at Diablo Village #2 to integrate communication with all Metro Southwest sites and to provide real time visibility of well status and reservoir levels to our water system operators. 💧**

### DID YOU KNOW...

Metro Water staff will never go to your home to collect or demand payment. In addition, staff will always wear the Metro Water logo and drive a marked Metro Water vehicle when working in the field. If you see anyone claiming to be Metro Water staff asking to collect payment, do not pay them and please call 520-575-8100. 💧



### Board of Directors:

Judy Scrivener, Chair  
Richard Sarti, Vice Chair  
Jim Doyle, Member  
Bryan Foulk, Member  
Dan M. Offret, Member

### Board Meetings:

Monday, July 13, 2020  
Monday, August 10, 2020  
Monday, September 14, 2020

Board meetings are held at  
6265 N. La Cañada Drive  
and typically start  
at 6:00 p.m.

Office Location:  
6265 N. La Cañada Dr.  
Tucson, Arizona 85704

Customer Service  
Phone Hours  
Monday - Thursday  
7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
Friday 7:30 a.m. - Noon

Office Lobby Hours:  
Monday - Thursday  
7:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.  
Friday 7:30 a.m. - Noon

*Metro Water offices  
will be closed:*

*Independence Day Observed,  
Friday, July 3, 2020*

*Labor Day,  
Monday September 7, 2020*

visit us at:

call us at:

email us at:

like us on facebook:

[www.metrowater.com](http://www.metrowater.com)

575-8100

[info@metrowater.com](mailto:info@metrowater.com)



# Splash Newsletter ~ Summer 2020