

# FALL 2020

Fairfax Water

# STRAIGHT FROM THE TAP

## Winter Is Coming: How To Be 'Winter Salt Smart'



### What's the problem?

In the winter, salt keeps us safe while we are on the move, but it also leads to higher levels of salt in the region's drinking water supply, including the Potomac River and Occoquan Reservoir. Learn more and be winter salt smart!

### What is winter salt?

Winter salt is rock salt (sodium chloride) or ice melt (a blend of sodium chloride, magnesium chloride, and other salt). These materials are used in the winter to prevent icing of sidewalks, parking lots, and roadways.

### What are the benefits of winter salt use?

- Results in fewer incidents of slip and fall injuries.
- Reduces number of vehicle crashes.
- Enables businesses, government, and social services to continue with minimal interruption.

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### *Proposed Changes to the Commodity Rate*

## Important Rate Information for 2021

At 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 10, 2020, the Fairfax Water Board will hold a public hearing on proposed revisions to the schedule of rates, fees, and charges. Proposed revisions include a change in the commodity charge from \$3.20 to \$3.33 per 1,000 gallons, effective with meter readings taken on or after April 1, 2021. See page 2 for a list of some of the proposed changes.

The public hearing will be held at Fairfax Water's main office at 8570 Executive Park Avenue in Fairfax. Visit [fairfaxwater.org/rates](https://www.fairfaxwater.org/rates) for a copy of the proposed changes and directions to the main office. 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.

Even with this increase, Fairfax Water's commodity rates will remain among the lowest in the Washington metropolitan region. The chart on page 2 compares regional utilities based on current commodity rates and service charges.

*(Continued on page 2)*

# Important Rate Information for 2021 (Continued from page 1)

The following tables show some of the proposed revisions to Fairfax Water's rates, fees, and charges. If approved, the revisions will be effective with meter readings taken on or after April 1, 2021. For a complete list of the proposed revisions, visit [fairfaxwater.org/rates](http://fairfaxwater.org/rates).

Charge	Description of Rate, Fee, or Charge	Current	Proposed
Commodity Charge	The charge per 1,000 gallons of water used in the previous three months.	\$3.20*	\$3.33*
Quarterly Billing Service Charge	Based on meter size, it offsets the cost of meter reading, repair and replacement, service repairs, billing, collecting, accounting, etc.	\$14.40**	\$14.85**
Peak Use Charge	The charge per 1,000 gallons of water applied to established accounts during billing periods from June through November for water consumption that is 1.3 times the winter quarter consumption or 6,000 gallons above the winter quarter consumption, whichever is greater.	\$3.85*	\$3.90*
Turn Off/Turn On Charge	Charge to restore water service that has been disconnected due to nonpayment or noncompliance; must be paid before water service can be restored.	\$49.00	\$50.00

\* 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.

\*\* Charges reflect fees associated with standard 5/8 inch residential meter. Charges for larger residential and commercial meters are proposed to increase and are reflected in the proposed Schedule of Rates, Fees, and Charges, available on our website at [www.fairfaxwater.org/rates](http://www.fairfaxwater.org/rates).

New Connection Charges	Description of Rate, Fee, or Charge	Current	Proposed
Availability Charge	For service to be furnished through each new separate service connection.	\$4,320	\$4,400
Local Facilities Charge	For each new service connection to an existing water main.	\$18,030	\$19,610
Service Connection Charge	For each new service connection and meter installation prior to the approval of the application.	\$1,370	\$1,430

## Comparison of Regional Water Rates

This comparison is based on rates as of July 1, 2020, and on 18,000 gallons of residential water use by an established customer over a three-month winter period. The amount shown for each jurisdiction/utility includes the service charge and the commodity charge, which is the rate charged for a certain number of gallons.

Jurisdiction/Utility	Quarterly Water Charge
City of Manassas Park, VA	\$205.50
Town of Leesburg, VA (outside town limits)	\$193.87
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (Montgomery/Prince George's counties, MD)	\$152.28
Virginia-American Water Company (Prince William County, VA)	\$150.25
Town of Leesburg, VA (inside town limits)	\$147.79
City of Bowie, MD	\$135.31
DC Water	\$133.35
City of Rockville, MD	\$123.17
Town of Vienna, VA	\$119.25
Virginia-American Water Company (City of Alexandria, VA)	\$115.05
Arlington County, VA	\$88.38
City of Manassas, VA	\$84.15
Loudoun Water	\$83.00
Prince William County Service Authority	\$82.65
<b>Fairfax Water</b>	<b>\$72.00</b>
Town of Herndon, VA	\$65.85

## What About Sewer Charges?

Fairfax Water does not provide your sewer service, but we do assist Fairfax County and the cities of Falls Church and Fairfax with sewer billing. This is a cost-saving measure and a convenience for our customers. Your sewer rates and associated billing methodology are established by your sewer service provider. It is a combination of a base charge and usage. It may also include taxes and/or other fees. Visit [fairfaxwater.org/sewer-charges](http://fairfaxwater.org/sewer-charges) to learn more.

# How To Be 'Winter Salt Smart'

*(Continued from page 1)*

## What are the downsides of salt use?

- Salt on impervious surfaces (sidewalks, parking lots, roads, etc.) is washed into storm drains, creeks, and rivers. This results in higher concentrations of salt in the region's drinking water sources: the Potomac River and Occoquan Reservoir.
- Salt corrodes vehicles and infrastructure (roads, bridges, sidewalks, parking lots).
- Salt increases the salinity in streams and groundwater, impacting freshwater fish and other aquatic life.

## What are Fairfax Water and other agencies doing to address this problem?

The Virginia Salt Management Strategy (SaMS) was established by a diverse group of stakeholders (including Fairfax Water) and coordinated by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. (VDEQ)

SaMS will provide recommendations for improving winter practices through efficient and effective use of salt while maintaining the same levels of safety. The ultimate goal of SaMS is to raise awareness of these impacts, show how individuals and organizations can participate, and provide guidance for monitoring and research to support action on SaMS recommendations.

In addition to assisting SaMS, Fairfax Water will continue to monitor source water quality and work closely with the county and other agencies to analyze trends and explore solutions.

## What can I do to help?

- Shovel early. Remove snow from pavements before it turns to ice. Use salt only after snow has been cleared and only in areas needed for safety.
- Use less. More salt does not mean more melting. A 12-ounce coffee mug of salt should be enough for a 20-foot driveway or about 10 sidewalk squares.
- Spread evenly. Try not to distribute in clumps.
- Watch the temperatures. When it is colder than 15°F, do not apply winter salt. It will not work. In those cases, consider building traction with alternatives like sand or native bird seed. Visit [fairfaxwater.org/winter-salt](http://fairfaxwater.org/winter-salt) to learn more!

# Glad You Asked!

**Q**

How can I prevent pipes from freezing in my home this winter?

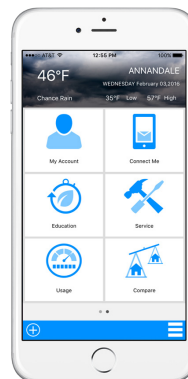
**A**

Whenever the temperatures dip into the teens, we suggest that you leave a thin, steady stream of water running from a faucet. This stream should measure out to be about a quarter gallon of water per minute. Doing so costs very little and can prevent expensive leaks and pipe repairs.

Visit [fairfaxwater.org/your-plumbing](http://fairfaxwater.org/your-plumbing) for more information on how to prepare your pipes for winter.



**Fairfax Water**



**DON'T FORGET THE APP!**

AVAILABLE FOR IOS  
AND ANDROID



If you have a question or concern, contact us at [pr@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:pr@fairfaxwater.org) or call 703-698-5600, TTY 711.



## Newsletter Feedback

If you have comments or suggestions about the newsletter, please send an email to [pr@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:pr@fairfaxwater.org), call us at 703-289-6291, or write to us at this address:

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

## Important Numbers

### Fairfax Water Services

Questions about water service or billing  
703-698-5800

After hours/emergencies  
703-698-5613

To report a water main break

703-698-5613 or email  
[watermainbreak@fairfaxwater.org](mailto:watermainbreak@fairfaxwater.org)

All other Fairfax Water departments  
703-698-5600

### Sewer Services

#### Fairfax County

Department of Public Works, Wastewater  
Trouble Response Center  
703-323-1211  
[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/wastewater](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/wastewater)

#### City of Falls Church

Department of Public Works  
703-248-5350  
[www.fallschurchva.gov](http://www.fallschurchva.gov)

#### City of Fairfax

Department of Public Works  
703-385-7810  
[www.fairfaxva.gov](http://www.fairfaxva.gov)

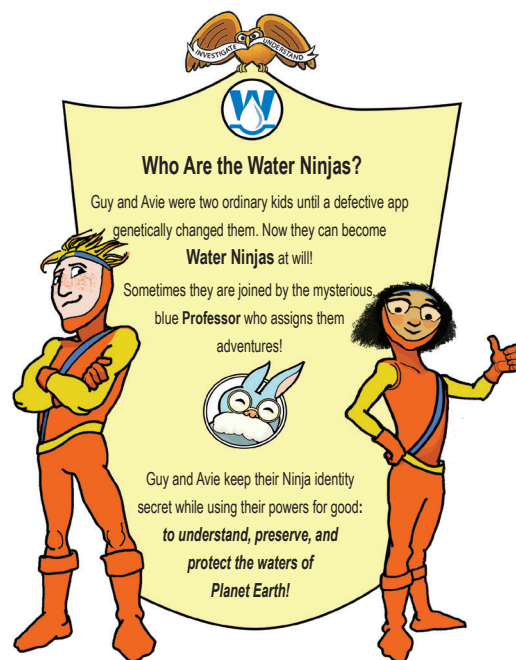
### Dig with C.A.R.E.

Miss Utility at 800-552-7001 or 811  
[va811.com/homeowners/how-to-when-to](http://va811.com/homeowners/how-to-when-to)



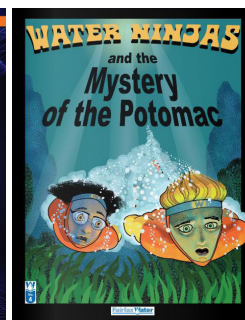
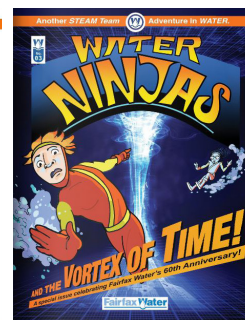
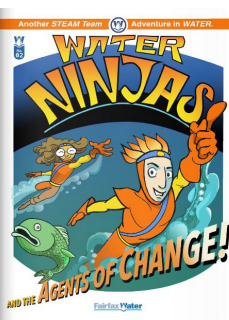
Use TTY 711 (Virginia Relay) for all numbers unless otherwise stated.

# A New Water Ninjas Adventure Available Soon!



## Four incredible stories about your drinking water!

Available now at [fairfaxwater.org/comics/](http://fairfaxwater.org/comics/)!



Want to know when we're closed for holidays?  
Check out our website!

[fairfaxwater.org/holidaycalendar](http://fairfaxwater.org/holidaycalendar)

## Fairfax Water

Fairfax Water is a public, nonprofit water authority serving nearly 2 million people in the Northern Virginia communities of Fairfax County, Loudoun, Prince William, Fort Belvoir, Herndon, Dulles, Vienna, Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax City.



## Water-Saving Tip

Lawn care is less demanding during the fall but should not be ignored. A healthy lawn requires at least 1 inch of water every week. For more water-saving tips, visit [www.wateruseitwisely.com](http://www.wateruseitwisely.com).