Fairfax Water WINTER 2022

STRAIGHT FROM THE TAP

Water Supply Planning

At Fairfax Water, we are always thinking ahead—especially when it comes to water supply planning. This type of planning is important because 2 million people in Northern Virginia rely on us to keep the water flowing! Fairfax Water not only provides high-quality drinking water directly to customers in Fairfax County and the Cities of Falls Church and Fairfax, but we also supply water to other utilities that serve customers in Loudoun County, Prince William County, the City of Alexandria, and other communities in Northern Virginia. Fairfax Water takes a regional perspective in its water supply planning efforts.

When it comes to water supply planning:

- **We are ready.** Our water supply planning efforts include estimating future water demands and evaluating the availability of water resources to identify when new sources of water may be needed to ensure a resilient water supply for the community we serve. Effective water supply planning addresses needs such as population growth as well as withstanding extreme droughts.
- **We are working with regional partners.** Fairfax Water and other major Washington Metropolitan Area water utilities serving customers in Maryland and the District of Columbia rely on the Potomac as a drinking water supply. Together, we have made significant investments in constructing and maintaining reservoir storage, agreed to cooperatively manage our supplies during times of low flows in the Potomac, and established drought operations procedures to ensure the region's water supply is resilient.
- **We are forward-thinking.** Utility-funded studies undertaken by the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin show that by 2040, there will be a need for additional water supply for drought resilience. As a result, Fairfax Water purchased an active rock quarry near its treatment plant in Lorton, VA. The quarry will eventually become the Steven T. Edgemon Reservoir, named after Fairfax Water's former General Manager who led efforts to secure this resource. The reservoir will be developed in two stages: stage one will be available in 2035, and stage two in 2085. The reservoir will ultimately hold up to 17 billion gallons of water upon completion. This will allow for water supply resiliency for generations to come.

Fairfax Water remains committed to maintaining a reliable supply of clean water for our community and working with our regional partners on this important issue. Together, we will be ready to adapt to future needs and keep the water flowing!

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Backflow Prevention

An example of a commonly installed backflow prevention device.

What is backflow?

Backflow is the reverse flow of water or liquids into the water supply via a cross-connection (a link between potable water and unsafe or unknown sources of water). This process can occur when the water pressure drops and a suction effect occurs, drawing water or liquids the wrong direction. A garden hose resting in a backyard puddle, pond, or pool can be a cross-connection.

If the water supply pressure were to drop, the water from the puddle, pond, or pool can be suctioned back through the hose and into the drinking water supply in an event called backflow.

What can I do to prevent backflow?

Backflow prevention assemblies, like the one pictured here, should be installed to protect your home's plumbing and the drinking water system if you have an in-ground lawn sprinkler system or fire suppression system. You can also prevent backflow by avoiding the creation of cross-connections. This can be as simple as keeping a garden hose away from unsafe sources of water, such as puddles or ponds.

How do I know if my home has or needs a backflow prevention assembly?

Approved backflow prevention assemblies are required for homes with in-ground lawn sprinkler systems and/or fire suppression systems. One may already be installed on your home's plumbing system. If you are unsure if you have a backflow prevention assembly, contact your irrigation company or fire sprinkler company.

My home has a backflow prevention assembly. What are my responsibilities as a homeowner?

The Virginia Construction Code and the Virginia Department of Health require backflow prevention assemblies to be tested by a certified tester at the time of installation and every year after that. Fairfax County's Land Development Services Department is responsible for administering these requirements as part of a collaborative effort with Fairfax Water. A Backflow Assembly Test Report must be completed and submitted each year to Fairfax County. Failure to return the required Backflow Assembly Test Report within the allotted timeframe may result in further action, up to and possibly including termination of water service. Visit **bit.ly/3zehHDp** to learn more about Fairfax County's requirements and homeowner responsibilities for the installation and testing of these devices.

What does Fairfax Water do to prevent backflow?

Fairfax Water coordinates with Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church to operate a joint Cross-Connection Control and Backflow Prevention Program in accordance with the Virginia Waterworks Regulations to ensure that backflow prevention devices are installed where needed and tested regularly to ensure they are working properly to protect the drinking water system.

For more information, please visit
fairfaxwater.org/cross-connection or scan the QR code.
You can send backflow-related questions to
backflow@fairfaxwater.org or call 703-289-6381.

Helpful Tips for Winter

There are several measures you can take to prevent winter water disasters.

- Please remember that when temperatures fall into the teens, we suggest that you leave a thin, steady stream of water running. This stream should measure out to be about a quart of water per minute. The cost to do this is very low and will save you on repair costs that could occur due to frozen pipes. You can collect the water and use it to water house plants.

- It is a good idea to locate and mark your mainline valve and check it for proper operation. This valve controls water flowing into your home and is usually found near the waterline that comes into your house. Marking the valve will allow you to quickly turn off the water if a pipe should burst or you have other water problems.

- Make sure the waterline to outside faucets is turned off and the line is drained. Drain each outdoor spigot after turning off the valve to prevent any remaining water from freezing and bursting the pipes. Some spigots have anti-siphon devices that must be opened to properly drain the line.

Fairfax Water Online Customer Portal:

Pay or View Your Bill Online 24/7/365!

Fairfax Water's self-service customer portal is a web-based platform that provides you with a convenient single access point to your account information that you can use on your desktop or mobile device via **fwcustomer.org** or our mobile app.

Once registered, you can conduct transactions (such as making payments, viewing bills, checking quarterly usage, and sending online messages) at your convenience.

Visit fwcustomer.org or scan the QR code to jump to the portal!

ANDROID APP ON Google play

Available on the App Store

We Want To Know . . .

If you have comments or suggestions about the newsletter, please send an email to *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

Info on water service and billing:
703-698-5800
After hours/emergencies:
703-698-5613
To report a water main break:
703-698-5613 or email
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
fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/wastewater

City of Falls Church
Department of Public Works:
703-248-5350
fallschurchva.gov

City of Fairfax
Department of Public Works:
703-385-7810
fairfaxva.gov

Dig With C.A.R.E.

Miss Utility at 800-552-7001 or 811
va811.com/how-to-when-to/

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

In Memory of Steven T. Edgemon, Former General Manager of Fairfax Water

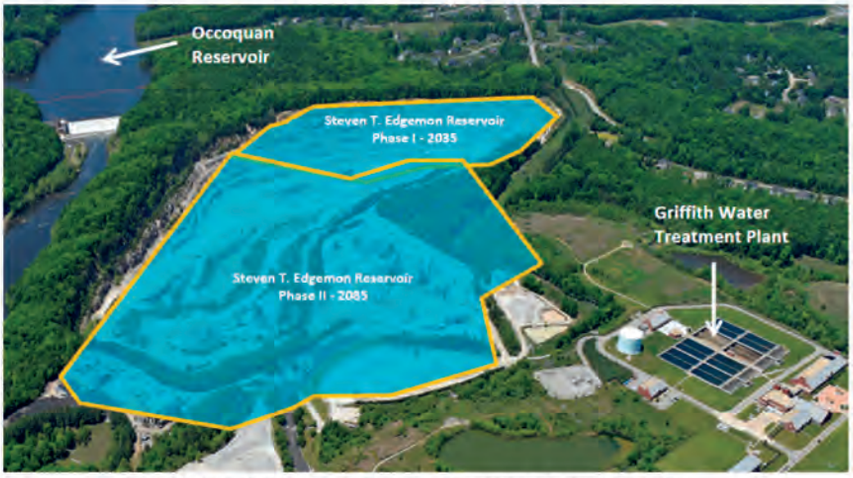
Steven T. Edgemon

It is with great sadness that Fairfax Water announces the untimely passing of former General Manager Steven T. Edgemon.

Mr. Edgemon retired from Fairfax Water in June 2021, following an accomplished 40-year career in the drinking water industry.

Among his many notable accomplishments, Mr. Edgemon led Fairfax Water's acquisition of a large quarry in Lorton, VA, which will eventually become a 17 billion gallon drinking water reservoir (as noted on page one). This new reservoir will be used to supplement the water supply to accommodate population growth in Northern Virginia and possible prolonged drought.

In 2021, the Fairfax Water Board approved naming this future reservoir the Steven T. Edgemon Reservoir in honor of his leadership and commitment to the community Fairfax Water serves.



The future Steven T. Edgemon Reservoir in Lorton, VA

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

fairfaxwater.org/holidaycalendar

Fairfax Water is a public, not-for-profit water authority serving nearly 2 million people in the Northern Virginia communities of Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William counties; Fort Belvoir, Herndon, Dulles, Vienna, Alexandria, Falls Church, and Fairfax City.

WATER USE IT WISELY

Know where your emergency shut-off valve is located. Even seconds of uncontrolled water use could be costly. For more tips on saving water, visit *wateruseitwisely.com*.