

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

The Water Quiz: Who Owns What?

Test your knowledge about the water system and see if you are a “water expert” or merely “an apprentice”!

Listed below are a number of parts of the water system. It is important to know which of these you are responsible for as a property owner, and which are owned and maintained by the utility. Read each of the items below and answer “a” if you believe it is owned/maintained by the utility and “b” if it is owned/maintained by the property owner. Good luck! The answers are listed below.

- 1) Wells - deep wells located throughout the county ranging from 150 to more than 1000 feet from which water is drawn from aquifers _____
- 2) Treatment plants - facilities that treat “raw” water taken from deep wells by using a series of processes that produce clean, safe “finished” water _____
- 3) Booster pump station - facility utilizing pumps to maintain constant water pressure in areas of higher elevation _____
- 4) Water Mains - miles of pipe used to transport water from treatment plants to customers _____
- 5) Service Line (Main to Meter) - pipes that go from the main line to the meter at the property line _____
- 6) Service Line (Meter to Home/Business) - pipe that goes from meter at property line to and into the building being served _____
- 7) Meter Vault - cement box with an iron lid that houses the water meter, yoke, and valve and sits at the property line _____
- 8) Water Meter - a highly accurate instrument which measures the amount of water which passes through it _____
- 9) Inside valve - controls the flow of water into a building _____
- 10) Pressure reducing valve - (only in high pressure areas) controls and regulates the pressure of water coming into a building _____
- 11) Fire hydrant - a mechanism that allows the fire department to tap into the public water system to fight fires and allows the utility system to flush main lines _____

The answers are below. Add them up and see how you did.

- 8 - 11 You are a water systems expert!
 4 - 7 You are a water systems apprentice!
 1 - 3 You need to study your Customer Updates and Water Quality Reports!

Did you know that old issues of the Customer Updates are available on line? Go to www.aacounty.org/DPW, click on Customer Relations then click on the report you want to see!

Past Drinking Water Quality Reports are also on-line. Go to www.aacounty.org/DPW, click on Water and Wastewater, then choose either last year’s report or “Archived” reports.

Answers: 1) a 2) a 3) a 4) a 5) a 6) b
 7) a 8) a 9) b 10) b 11) a



High Water Bill?

Review your water usage habits...



Water bill seem higher than usual? The amount of your bill is based on “consumption” or the amount of water you use. So if your bill seems high, consider the following before calling Customer Service for assistance:

- Check consumption on last year’s bill for the same period. Consumption levels differ during the year, but tend to be consistent during the same period each year. Is there a significant difference from the same period last year?
- If there is a significant difference, consider any changes in your household. Are there more people living in the home? Are some family members now retired, no longer in school, or working from home? Have their water usage habits changed? More and longer showers? More laundry? New dishwasher?
- Have there been any outdoor water usage changes? Have you recently landscaped? New sodding? New gardens? New sprinkler system? Outdoor water usage makes up more than half of the average household’s water consumption, even though it is not used throughout the entire year. Changes to outdoor water usage can make significant changes to consumption and therefore water bills.
- Have you checked the home inside and out for leaks? Some leaks are obvious—the constant running of a faucet or toilet—but others are intermittent and difficult to identify. Check all toilets for running water and use dye tabs or food coloring in the tank. If the color appears in the water in the bowl without flushing, you have a leak.
- Outside and underground leaks may be harder to detect. Check for areas of the ground that are wet, soggy or show signs of soil erosion from water draining, especially in the areas of your underground water line between the water meter and your home, and also around outside spigots.
- Have you made any repairs, improvements or changes to your home in which a pipe may have been cracked? Was your sprinkler system winterized? Sprinkler systems are vulnerable to cracking in freezing weather.
- Consider that you may need a plumber to do an audit on your home to insure there are no leaks or other plumbing failures.
- If you have reviewed your water usage and still need assistance, call Customer Service at Billing at 410-222-1144. A knowledgeable and experienced Customer Service Representative will assist you in

reviewing your account.

- Visit www.aacounty.org/DPW, click on Water/Wastewater and then the following links for water conservation information:
 - Water Conservation
 - Water Saving Tips
 - Water Leaks
 - Water Saver
 - Xeriscaping

By performing personal audits of your water usage, you may help conserve water and also save money!

Helpful Telephone Numbers for The Department of Public Works

24-hour EMERGENCY service for water and wastewater
 (after 3:30 p.m.) ... 410-222-8400
 South County... 410-451-4118

After 3:30 p.m., weekends and holiday EMERGENCY Service for stormdrains, roads, traffic lights/signs... 410-222-6120

For weekday EMERGENCIES (between 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.) involving stormdrains, roads, or traffic lights/signs, please call the appropriate district office. If you do not know what district to call, please call any of these Customer Relations numbers...

Customer Relations...	410-222-7582
General Information...	410-222-7500
Billing Information...	410-222-1144
Bulk Item Trash Service, Recycling Information, Trash Collection...	410-222-6100
Northern Roads District...	410-222-6120
Southern Roads District...	410-222-1933
Central Roads District...	
Crownsville Yard...	410-222-7940
Central Roads District...	
Odenton Yard...	410-222-6126

During snow emergencies (4” or more) customers in all roads districts please call... 410-222-4040

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 Department of Public Works
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www.aacounty.org/dpw

