



Dear Valued Customer,

As your elected Water District Commissioners, our mission is to oversee the delivery of safe, clean drinking water at an affordable cost. We take this responsibility seriously and are continually exploring ways to increase our efficiency and effectiveness.

Capital Improvement Updates: In May 2024, we shared our long-term capital improvement plan regarding priority water main replacements. We are pleased to announce that the replacement projects for Academy Road and Toad Lake Road are scheduled to begin on June 1, 2026, with an estimated completion date of September 1, 2026. You can view the full long-term plan anytime on our website at www.waterDistrict7.com.

Water Quality Data: Please review the document attached to this notice. This report contains essential data on mineral content, pH levels, and trace contaminants, confirming that our water continues to meet all health and safety standards.

Our Commitment to You: We strive to ensure our community enjoys a safe, dependable, and sustainable water supply both now and for the future. We appreciate your continued support as we move forward with these vital infrastructure projects.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

Your Water District #7 Commissioners and Staff

2026 Water Quality Report

This report is a requirement of the Safe Drinking Water Act. It provides a summary of the tests performed on your drinking water throughout 2025, allowing you to assess the quality and safety of your supply. Because much of the language in this report is technical or required by law, we are available to help translate these findings. If you have difficulty understanding the content or have specific questions, please contact Peg Wendling at (360) 778-7872.

Water District #7 is a reseller of water; all water sold by the District is purchased from the City of Bellingham. The water is processed at the City's water treatment plant located in Whatcom Falls Park. The City's water—and therefore the District's water—originates from Lake Whatcom. A natural reservoir located east of Bellingham; Lake Whatcom provides the raw water that the City pumps to its filtration plant for rigorous treatment and disinfection.

The City of Bellingham maintains a comprehensive water quality testing program at the source. Additionally, Water District #7 regularly tests for the presence of coliform bacteria and residual chlorine within our specific distribution system to ensure a safe, reliable supply reaches your home.

The sources of drinking water (both tap and bottled) include rivers, lakes, streams, ponds, reservoirs, springs, and wells. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it dissolves naturally occurring minerals and radioactive material. It can also pick up substances resulting from human or animal activity. All raw water must undergo a treatment process before it is safe to consume.

Some individuals may be more vulnerable to drinking water contaminants than the general population. Immuno-compromised persons—such as those undergoing chemotherapy, organ transplant recipients, people with HIV/AIDS or other immune system disorders, some elderly individuals, and infants—can be particularly at risk for infections.

These individuals should seek advice about drinking water from their healthcare providers. Guidelines from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on appropriate means to lessen the risk of infection by *Cryptosporidium* and other microbial contaminants are available from the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline at (800) 426-4791.

Drinking water, including bottled water, may reasonably be expected to contain at least small amounts of some contaminants. The presence of contaminants does not necessarily indicate that the water poses a health risk. More information about contaminants and potential health effects can be obtained by calling the EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline.

To ensure that tap water is safe to drink, the EPA prescribes regulations that limit the amount of certain contaminants in water provided by public water systems. We are proud to report that the water supplied by Water District #7 met or exceeded all federal health and safety standards last year.

Reportable Parameters For 2025

Disinfection By-Products - Total Trihalomethanes (THM) and Haloacetic Acids (HAA): THMs and HAAs are the most common type of disinfection by-products (DBP's). The city samples for DBP's at 8 sites in the water distribution system each quarter. Levels for 2025 were the following:

THM: Average: (all sites) 33.0 ppb (Range: 13.0 to 43.0 ppb)
HAA: Average (all sites) 14.0 ppb (Range: 8.0 to 17.0 ppb)
Average MCL must be below 80 ppb THM and below 60 ppb HAA.

Water District #7's average disinfection by-product levels were the following:

THM Average 52.5 ppb (Range: 24.9 to 52.5 ppb)
HAA Average: 14.4 ppb (Range: 11.1 to 14.4 ppb)

Free Chlorine Residual: Chlorine levels are monitored continuously at the water filtration plant. Over 100 distribution system samples are also analyzed each month to ensure a disinfectant residual remains in treated water on its way to our customer's homes. Of the chlorine samples collected in the distribution system, the average chlorine was .46 ppm with a range of <0.02 to 1.07 ppm. There is a requirement for a measurable chlorine residual at 95% of all monitoring sites a month.

Lead and Copper: Lead and Copper are monitored every three years in our customers' homes to assess the amount of corrosion occurring in home plumbing. The water sampled in the first draw of stagnant water in homes was identified as having lead solder and copper pipe. There are no lead service lines in Bellingham.

Treatment technique is a required process intended to reduce the level of contaminants in drinking water.

Lead (2023 sampling) The 90th percentile value of homes sampled showed lead at the 3-ppb level. The range of values was <1 to 7 ppb.

Copper (2023 sampling) The 90th percentile value of homes sampled was 90 ppb. The range of values was 11 to 216 ppb. No sites were above the action level.

The allowable highest 90th percentile values are lead at 15 ppb and copper at 1300 ppb. Lead and copper are monitored every 3 years. There are no lead service lines in Bellingham. Sampling will next be conducted in 2026.

Total and Fecal Coliform Bacteria: Bellingham collects over 100 samples a month at locations throughout our water distribution system and analyzes these for coliform bacteria to ensure water purity. No more than 5% of these samples can be positive for total coliform bacteria, and none can be positive for *Escherichia coli*. Coliform bacteria was 1% positive in July and 2% positive in August and September due to contaminated sample stations; it was 0% positive all other months. No *Escherichia coli* was detected in 2025.

The highest allowable percentage of total coliform positive samples a month is 5%. The presence of any fecal coliform in drinking water samples of two consecutive samples would require public notification of this problem within 24 hours.

Water District #7 takes two coliform samples each month within the District. No positive coliform was detected in 2025.

Turbidity: Turbidity is a measurement of the clarity of the water. The city monitors turbidity continuously at the beginning, middle, and end of the treatment process. Turbidity reported for compliance is in the treated water. Bellingham's single highest turbidity level for 2025 was 0.05 nephelometric units (NTU). Bellingham met the Department of Health's limit 0.3 NTU requirement in 2025 100% of the time.

Compliance means filtered water turbidity shall be less than or equal to 0.3 NTU in at least 95% of the measurements made each month and shall never exceed 1.0 NTU.

Important Health Note: Lead in Plumbing

Elevated levels of lead can cause serious health problems, especially for pregnant women and young children. While lead is not found in Bellingham's treated water, it can leach from household pipes and faucets. The City of Bellingham is responsible for providing high quality drinking water but cannot control the variety of materials used in a customer's plumbing. If your water has been sitting for several hours, you can minimize potential exposure by flushing your tap for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before using the water for drinking or cooking. If you have concerns regarding lead levels in your home, you may choose to have your water tested by a certified local laboratory. For more information, visit <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/lead>.

Glossary of Terms

- **PPM/PPB:** Parts per million / Parts per billion
- **MCL/MCLG:** Maximum Contaminant Level / Maximum Contaminant Level Goal
- **AL:** Action Level
- **MRDL:** Maximum Residual Disinfectant Level

2026

Water System Plan

Following our 2025 report, the District has completed the replacement of water meters, the first step in our water loss reduction program. Data from these more accurate readings has helped us prioritize areas with "unaccounted-for water." Next steps include leak detection programs and the replacement of leaking water mains.

We have prioritized several aging distribution mains for replacement. These include approximately 6,500 feet from the Britton Road/Emerald Lake Way intersection south to the Britton Booster Pump Station; 3,600 feet on Toad Lake Road; and 4,200 feet on Academy Road.

The following priority projects are scheduled to begin on June 1, 2026:

1. Academy Road Pipe Replacement
2. Toad Lake Road Pipe Replacement
3. Summit Road Pipe Replacement

These essential projects will impact the budget over the next nine years and will require substantial rate and fee increases. The District has successfully secured funding from the Public Works Board to help offset these costs.

Water Use Efficiency

Reducing individual water use lowers monthly bills and helps the District by reducing the amount of water we must purchase from the City of Bellingham and the electricity required to operate the system. State law also requires the District to implement a Water Use Efficiency program.

Beyond infrastructure improvements and leak detection, the District utilizes a tiered rate structure (implemented in 2008) to promote water efficiency. Under this system, the unit cost of water increases with higher consumption, allowing customers to directly lower their bills by reducing usage. Simple actions—such as fixing a leaky faucet, using faucet aerators, or adjusting lawn watering habits—can prevent significant waste. In fact, common household leaks can waste enough water in a single year to fill a backyard swimming pool.

While District staff proactively monitor for leaks during routine maintenance and meter readings, community vigilance is essential. Please report any signs of a potential leak, such as running water or unusual wet spots, to our office immediately. Residents can also identify private-side leaks by monitoring for sudden spikes in water usage or billing. Please note the 'line of responsibility': the District maintains all infrastructure up to and including the water meter. All components beyond the meter—including service lines and pressure-reducing valves—are the property owner's responsibility to maintain and repair.

During the 2025 operating year, 38,244,689 gallons were purchased and 34,639,633 gallons were delivered. Our current water loss rate stands at 9.4%, which falls within expected ranges for systems undergoing active leak detection and construction.

Leak Adjustments

Customers often inquire about receiving credit for high bills caused by leaks on their property. Because the District must pay the City of Bellingham for every gallon purchased, we are obligated to pass those costs through to our customers and cannot offer a full credit for leaked water. However, the District maintains a "Leak Adjustment Policy" that may reduce the rate charged for water lost during a substantiated leak. If you discover a leak, please make repairs immediately, keep all receipts and photographic evidence, and contact our office to apply for an adjustment. A summary of this policy is provided on the following page.

Leak Adjustment Policy

The District may adjust the commodity charge for high water bills due to a leak. "Leak" refers to a structural or mechanical failure of the customer's water piping system resulting in a significant loss of water. No adjustments will be made for a loss of less than 1,000 cubic feet per bi-monthly billing period or more than one adjustment in a twelve (12) month period per account. Intentional or accidental water use, loss due to vandalism, or theft does constitute a leak.

When the District observes a leak or high usage it will attempt to notify the occupant or property owner (phone #'s appreciated), but it shall remain the property owners' responsibility to discover and repair any leak. To be eligible for a leak adjustment, the owner must complete repairs and submit a signed adjustment request along with proof of repairs, within two (2) weeks of the date the occupant or owner was notified by the District or otherwise knew or should have known of the leak. If there are no invoices or receipts available, a written assertion that the leak was repaired is acceptable. Failure to complete the preceding may forfeit any opportunity for a leak adjustment.

The quantity of water eligible for a leak adjustment will be the total water used for the billing period in which the leak was identified less than the quantity of water used from the same billing period in the previous year. If the customer has occupied the house for less than one year, the quantity to be adjusted will be the average of the three billing cycles immediately prior to the discovery of the leak.

When a leak occurs, the overage may show up on more than one consecutive billing cycle, and therefore upon request, the District may adjust up to two billing cycles to assure the customer receives the most favorable adjustment. Late charges on bills approved for a leak adjustment will be waived if the customer adheres to a prearranged payment schedule. There is no cap to limit the customers' costs.

Water Billing & Shut Off Procedures

Water meters are read and billed on a bi-monthly schedule (every other month). In the months between billings, the District mails past-due notices to accounts with outstanding balances. Each bill specifies a "Bill Date" and a "Due Date"; any balance remaining after the Due Date is considered past due.

- Late Fees: A monthly late charge of 4% or \$10.00 (whichever is greater) is applied to all past-due amounts.
- Service Disconnection: Accounts more than 60 days past due with a balance exceeding \$80.00 are subject to service disconnection. A \$50.00 shut-off fee is assessed when staff is dispatched, and a \$50.00 restoration fee is required to turn the service back on.
- Property Liens: Accounts more than 60 days past due with a balance exceeding \$200.00 may have a lien placed against the property.

For questions regarding your account, please contact the District at office@waterDistrict7.com or 360-752-9208.

Smart Watering Schedule

To reduce seasonal stress on our regional drinking water supply, we ask that all District customers follow this conservation schedule annually from June 1st through September 15th. Adhering to these specific days ensures that the City's reservoirs maintain the necessary levels and pressure for our entire community:

- Odd-Numbered Addresses: Outdoor watering is suggested only on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays.
- Even-Numbered Addresses: Outdoor watering is suggested only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.
- Mondays (All Addresses): No outdoor watering is requested. This "rest day" allows the City's reservoirs to fully recharge for the week ahead.

<u>Sunday</u>	<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>
Odd	No Watering	Even	Odd	Even	Odd	Even

Your elected Commissioners for 2026



Mark
Lann



George
Kaas



Tessa
Ebbesen

The Board of Commissioners meets on the second Tuesday of every month at 5:00 p.m. These meetings are open to the public and held at our District office located at the following address:

601 Northshore Dr., Ste. 101
Bellingham, WA 98226

District Leadership includes Dave Olson, Operations Manager, and Deanna Dobbs, Office Manager