

Information about your water, drainage and wastewater, and garbage and recycling services.

How Meter Readers Read Your Meter

Take a look inside your water meter box. You may discover piles of dirt, standing water, plants, cobwebs, and more. With all these obstacles, can a meter reader can actually read your meter well enough to make sure the bi-monthly bills you receive accurate? The short answer is: yes!

Seattle Public Utilities' 23 meter readers cover 617 meter reading routes across Seattle and around King County, completing a total of 1.1 million reads each year. Their job is to ensure that each residential water meter is read 6 times per year in order to provide timely and accurate water bills to SPU customers.

Tricks of the Trade

Each meter reader carries a variety of tools to help them access the water meter dial long enough to get an accurate read. Here are a few of the most common obstacles they face, and the tools they use to overcome them:



A meter box full of dirt

Frequently, when a meter reader opens a meter box lid, they are greeted by a pile of dirt. A small shovel is all they need to get a peek at the meter dial.



A meter box full of water

When it rains, some meter boxes can fill up with water. Meter readers carry a clear plastic tube, open on one end, which they stick down into the water to view the meter dial.



A scratched dial cover

After years underground, the clear cover of a water meter dial can become cloudy with scratches and dirt. A quick spray with water gives the meter reader a clear view of the numbers on the dial.



Obstructions

Everything from blackberry bushes to parked cars can make it hard to access your meter. Meter readers carry pruners to tackle plant overgrowth, but some obstructions can't be overcome. In that case, they'll leave you a note.



Watch videos about meter reading: go to bit.ly/SPU_MeterReading



Are You Ready For Winter?

Windstorms, heavy rains, snow and ice are all part of our Northwest winters. Here are a few things you can do now to get ready:

- Create a family emergency kit**
Include enough water, food, and other supplies (flashlights, crank/battery-operated radio, blankets) to meet your family's needs for at least two weeks.
- Clear storm drains**
Clear leaves and debris away from storm drains to prevent street flooding in your neighborhood. If a storm drain appears to be blocked below the surface, call Seattle Public Utilities' Operations Response Center at **206-386-1800**.
- Sign up for AlertSeattle**
AlertSeattle is the official emergency notification system used by the City of Seattle to communicate with city residents. Sign up: www.alert.seattle.gov.

For more weather preparedness tips and checklists, go to www.takewinterbystorm.org.



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Recycle Your Holidays

Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, U.S. household waste increases by 25 percent—that's about 1 million tons per week! To do your part to cut down on that extra waste, check out this list of holiday recycling tips:

- **Bubble Wrap**

Reused bubble wrap is great for storing fragile items. If you can't reuse it, bundle it together in a plastic bag, then toss it in your recycling cart.

- **Gift Wrap**

Most wrapping paper can be recycled in your home recycling cart. A little tape is fine, but remove the big pieces.

- **Holiday Lights**

During the holiday season, holiday light recycling programs take your old light strands and recycle the copper wire inside them. Find a location at www.bit.ly/recycleholidaylights.

- **Packing Peanuts**

Foam packing peanuts are not recyclable, but they are reusable. Many gift shops and shipping centers will accept clean packing peanuts free of charge to use in packaging and shipping.

Trees and Other Holiday Greens

From Dec. 26–Jan. 31, holiday trees (trimmed to 6-feet or less) and greens can be placed curbside for pickup on your regular collection day at no extra charge. At apartments, one tree may be placed next to each food and yard waste cart for no additional charge each collection day. Trees will be composted at a composting facility.

For answers to your other “Where does it go?” questions, use our look-up tool at www.seattle.gov/util/wheredoesitgo or tweet us @SeattleSPU with #WhereDoesItGo.



Compost your holiday greens for free: Dec. 26–Jan. 31

Protect Your Pipes: don't pour grease down the drain

Planning a big holiday meal? Fats, oils, and grease from cooking can build up in sewer pipes, causing costly blockages and backups. Protect your pipes with three simple steps:

1. **Cool it, can it, trash it**

Pour fats, oils, and grease into a sealable, disposable container. Cover and store in the freezer until hardened, then put the container in the trash.

2. **Soak up the rest**

Use a paper towel to absorb small amounts of fats, oils, and grease. Dispose of the soiled paper towel in your kitchen compost or household food and yard waste bin.

3. **Scrape before you rinse**

Scrape leftover food scraps off of dishes before rinsing them in the sink.



Cooking with oil? Don't pour it down the drain! Dispose of it properly to protect your pipes.



Watch what happens when you pour fats, oils, and grease down your drain: bit.ly/SPU_FOG

Winter Collection Schedule

No pickup on Thanksgiving

If your regular collection day falls on Thanksgiving this year (Thursday, Nov. 23), your garbage, recycling, and/or food and yard waste will be collected the following day (Friday, Nov. 24). To look up your collection day or report a missed collection, visit www.seattle.gov/util or call 206-684-3000.

Snow/Ice Collections

During snowy or icy weather, go to www.seattle.gov/util, find us on social media, or check your local news to see if there are any delays in your collection.

You can also sign up for AlertSeattle for timely collection schedule updates. Go to: www.alert.seattle.gov.



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