

water rings

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The True Value of Tap Water

As the fury of Hurricane Sandy crashed into the Northeast this past fall, citizens in its path lost service after service...electricity, heat, phones, internet. In New York City, even with darkened neighborhoods and flooded subways, the water supply remained intact. In the midst of recovery Mayor Michael Bloomberg proudly tweeted "NYC Tap Water is absolutely safe to drink." The media, however, hardly noticed.

In a similar manner to New York City, we also were able to maintain our water supply by using backup generators at both our Chalfont water plant and our North Wales headquarters. This kept our main water pumps and all essential control systems functioning throughout the storm event - despite our 30+ hour loss of electrical power from PECO. As a result of emergency preplanning and the extra efforts of many staff members who responded during the storm, we are proud to say that not one NWWA customer lost access to their water supply during Superstorm Sandy. While some may take access to reliable, clean drinking water for granted, we do not. There is no asset more vital and valuable to the community.

Only Tap Water DeliversSM - As a NWWA residential customer, you pay \$3.60 for every 1,000 gallons of water that is delivered directly into your home. Yet, many people are willing to pay over \$1.20 for just 20 ounces of bottled water. While bottled water does have its uses and benefits, the fact is that tap water delivers so many things that no other water can deliver.

- It delivers public health protection.
- It delivers fire protection.
- It delivers support for the economy.
- It delivers quality of life.

When we begin to think about the value of water in these areas, we'll have a better understanding why we at NWWA work so hard to care for our resources and infrastructure.

Public Health Protection - We live in a world where over one billion people must drink

from unsafe water sources. We are fortunate to have sophisticated water treatment and distribution systems in place so that we can take the safety of our water for granted. Only tap water delivers public health.

Fire Protection - Cities and neighborhoods would be at risk of becoming disastrous infernos without access to water delivered at adequate volume and pressure. Imagine trying to extinguish a fire with a bottle of water! Only tap water delivers fire protection.

Economic Support - A sustainable water supply is a must for the development, survival and success of residential communities and commercial enterprises. Only tap water delivers critical support for the economy.

Quality of Life - Tap water is so intricately woven into our lives that we can hardly imagine a day without it. With what would we mix our orange juice or rinse our lettuce? How would we water our plants or clean our dishes and clothes? We take these conveniences for granted. Only tap water delivers our quality of life.

Maintaining an Aging System - The NWWA delivers this essential resource throughout its 50 square mile service area by way of approximately 390 miles of pipe. To maintain water quality, it is essential that this pipe or water main be replaced as it ages. As part of our aggressive cast iron main enhancement program, in 2012 we replaced almost 4,100 feet of aging water main at a cost of approximately \$250,000.

The cost of providing reliable, safe tap water service will cost more in the future than it does today and all involved will be asked to share a portion of those increasing costs. However, when you consider the critical needs addressed by water service, tap water will always be a tremendous value. You simply cannot put a price on a service that delivers so much in our lives.



NWWA

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This Issue

The Value of Water 1

**Avoiding Frozen Pipes
Average Water Use 2
Q & A - Tap Water
Pricing**



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Avoid Frozen Pipes and Meters

Follow these simple tips to avoid problems with frozen pipes or meters this winter:

- Don't turn the heat down too low in your basement.
- If a building will be empty, have the water turned off, the pipes drained and the water meter removed.
- Fill holes in doors, windows and walls near meters and pipes.
- Be sure heat can circulate around meters and pipes.
- Regularly check insulation for dampness. Wet insulation is worse than no insulation.
- If your meter is located outside in a meter vault or pit, make sure the covers are closed and in good shape. If your meter is outside of the building, be sure the meter cover is secure and not cracked.

Is Yours An Average NWWA Household?

Have you wondered how your household's water consumption compares to that of the average American household?

Average Daily Household Water Use -

Nationwide - 360 gallons

NWWA Customers - 256 gallons 

Average Annual Household Water Use -

Nationwide - 131,400 gallons

NWWA Customers - 93,440 gallons 

Where do we use the most water in our homes?

Toilets - 26.7%

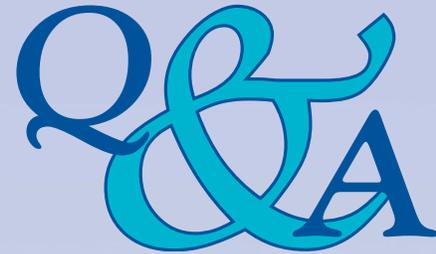
Clothes Washer - 21.7%

Shower - 16.8%

Faucets - 15.7%

Leaks - 13.7%

Other - 5.3%



Q: *Since water is so vital to our economic and social welfare, why is it priced so much lower than commodities that have no bearing on our ability to sustain life?*

A: Throughout world history, water has been approached primarily as an engineering issue rather than a socio-economic one. Water is a valuable and unique commodity, yet over the years it has been priced and used without understanding its true worth. People have treated water as though the supply is endless and it's worth marginal.

As water resources become increasingly scarce and pressure among competing water users grows, it is important to understand the value of this essential resource. The fact is the cost of making water safe continues to rise as the federal government adds new contaminants to the list of those to be monitored. Also, much of the existing drinking water infrastructure (underground networks of pipes, treatment plants, and other facilities) was built many years ago. The US EPA Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey, released in 2007, estimated that drinking water systems nationwide will need to invest \$334.80 billion over a 20-year period to ensure the continued source development, storage, treatment, and distribution of safe drinking water. Many agree this is a very conservative low estimate.

North Wales Water Authority residential customers pay \$3.60 per 1,000 gallons of water used, a rate that has gone unchanged in sixteen years. If our rate structure had followed the rate of inflation in the United States over that sixteen-year-period, our residential rate today would be \$5.31 per 1,000 gallons.

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