

# CURRENTS

## Understanding Drinking Water Quality

Learn what's behind our Annual Water Quality Report



At the Pittsburgh Water and Sewer Authority (PWSA), the quality of your drinking water is our top priority. As an organization dedicated to providing safe, reliable drinking water, we want you to understand the steps we take to treat, test, and monitor the water you rely on each day.

The treatment process begins at the Allegheny River – the source of our drinking water. It enters the PWSA Water Treatment Plant and goes through several stages of treatment before entering the distribution system.

**1. Clarification:** this first step removes suspended solids, which are small solid particles, from the raw water using a chemical process that clumps organic material together. This material settles out of the water by gravity.

**2. Filtration:** Next, clarified water passes slowly through anthracite and sand filters to remove fine particles such as microorganisms.

**3. Disinfection:** Filtered water is sent through a large storage tank called a clearwell that is treated with chlorine to inactivate harmful microorganisms. Additional chemicals are also added such as sodium carbonate to adjust the pH and fluoride to prevent cavities in teeth.

Each day, we test for approximately 100 different

chemical and microbial constituents before, during, and after the treatment process and work tirelessly to maximize their reduction and removal from your drinking water.

All the contaminants we test for are regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency and Pennsylvania Department of

Environmental Protection. Our annual Water Quality Report, available online at [pgh2o.com/2021WaterQuality](http://pgh2o.com/2021WaterQuality), outlines the test results as well as other initiatives underway to protect drinking water quality.

Over the next several years, we will construct the [Water Reliability Plan](#) – a series of generational projects to renew key components of our water

### Next Board Meeting: June 22

For a complete list of PWSA's board and community meetings, please visit [Pgh2o.com/events-meetings](http://Pgh2o.com/events-meetings).

Following COVID-19 restrictions, meetings are held virtually and may be tentative or postponed.

production and distribution systems. When complete, these projects will strengthen our water system, add needed redundancy, and ensure an uninterrupted supply of quality water to our drinking water customers. The first projects are currently under construction within the vicinity of Highland Park.

Lead levels in Pittsburgh's [drinking water remain well below](#) the state and federal action level of 15 parts per billion (ppb). We are committed to removing all lead service lines from our drinking water system and continue to refine our treatment process to reduce lead levels further. Meeting our regulatory obligations and remaining in compliance is a serious undertaking at PWSA. We are bolstering staffing at the Water Treatment Plant and in our lab to ensure the right leadership and skill sets are in place to build upon the progress we've made these past few years.

We encourage you to read our 2021 Water Quality Report, available at [Pgh2o.com/2021WaterQuality](http://Pgh2o.com/2021WaterQuality).

If you have questions or prefer to have a hard copy sent by mail, please call Customer Service at **412-255-2423 (Press 5)**.

Join our email list to get the latest news and updates. Signing up is simple at [pgh2o.com/subscribe](http://pgh2o.com/subscribe).





# Customer Assistance Programs

Our Customer Assistance Programs are designed to provide financial relief for income-qualified residential customers who are having difficulty paying their PGH2O bill.

- **Winter Shut Off Moratorium:** December 1st through March 31st for customers who are at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- **Bill Discount Program:** 100% reduction of minimum monthly water and wastewater conveyance charges and an 85% discount on stormwater charges for customers who are at or below 150% of FPL.
- **Flexible Payment Plans:** We offer income-based payment arrangements to help customers pay down high balances without accruing penalties and interest.
- **Hardship Grant Program:** Cash grants up to \$300 per year for customers at or below 150% of FPL.
- **Lead Service Line Reimbursement Program:** PWSA will assist customers with the cost of private lead service line replacement. For more information, visit [lead.pgh2o.com/leadreimbursement](http://lead.pgh2o.com/leadreimbursement).

For more information about the Customer Assistance Program, please visit [Pgh2o.com/CAP](http://Pgh2o.com/CAP) or call Dollar Energy Fund at **866.762.2348**.

## Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Donate to the Hardship Grant Program online at [Pgh2o.com/give](http://Pgh2o.com/give).

## Do We Have Your Number?

Did you know that we call customers during water emergencies and outages? It is important to verify that we have the best number to reach you. You can even add multiple numbers for your account, so your entire household is informed about our work.

### HOW DO I UPDATE MY CONTACT INFORMATION?

Visit our website: [Pgh2o.com/update-contact-info](http://Pgh2o.com/update-contact-info)  
Or call PWSA Customer Service: **412.255.2423 (Press 5)**

## Enroll in eBilling

Convenient and easy to use, our online billing and payment portal ensures timely delivery of bills and payments. Visit [Pgh2o.com/ebilling](http://Pgh2o.com/ebilling) to enroll.

Penn Liberty Plaza 1  
1200 Penn Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222

**Customer Service\***  
T 412.255.2423 (Press 5)  
[info@pgh2o.com](mailto:info@pgh2o.com)  
*\*translation services available*

**Emergency Dispatch\***  
412.255.2423 (Press 1)  
Available 24/7

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## WATER WISE

### What Is Impervious Area and Why Is It Important?



*Impervious area is shaded in blue on this aerial image of a property.*

Our stormwater fee is charged to each property in the city based on the amount of impervious area on that parcel. Impervious area is any manmade surface that prevents or limits water soaking into the ground. Instead, stormwater runs off these hard surfaces, contributing to flooding and river pollution.

Since more impervious surface area means more stormwater runoff that needs to be managed, charging for stormwater services based on impervious area is the industry standard for stormwater utilities. This method is more equitable than charging for stormwater management based on water meter usage.

#### Impervious area includes:

- private streets
- driveways
- concrete pads
- structures
- roofs
- mobile homes
- private sidewalks/walkways
- parking lots
- patios and decks
- athletic facilities and artificial turf
- pools (above ground and in-ground)
- compacted earth or clay
- gravel that is installed and maintained for vehicle travel or parking
- trails (paved or unpaved)