



The Water Drop

Fall 2025

Your Seal Rock Water District Newsletter

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BEAT THE FREEZE: Easy steps to prevent winter water woes

It's been said that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure—but when it comes to winter weather and freezing pipes, an ounce of prevention can literally be worth gallons of water and a hefty utility bill.

Brad Wynn, a 20-year veteran of the Seal Rock Water District (SRWD), has witnessed the consequences of exposed pipes and icy temperatures.

"I remember a house where they had a PVC pipe wrapped around the deck, and it wasn't frost protected. It froze, and they had themselves a full-fledged gusher—going through 20 gallons a minute," he recalled.

The good news is that prevention is easily attainable for most homeowners. In his role as Operations Lead at SRWD, Wynn suggests taking several steps before freezing weather arrives, including:

- **Wrapping exposed pipes and faucets with insulation**
- **Disconnecting hoses from outside faucets**
- **Covering foundation vents with foam blocks or cardboard**
- **Insulating hot and cold pipes in unheated areas (garage, crawl space, attic)**
- **Turning off and draining irrigation systems and backflow devices**

"Take these steps in advance of cold weather because you never know when it's going to



come," Wynn advises. "You don't want to wait until the last minute."

Equally important to taking precautionary steps is knowing where the customer shut-off valve is located. Finding the water meter and understanding that the customer valve is located in that same box, between the meter and the house, is crucial. It's also important to make sure all household members know what to do in case of a water emergency.

"It's helpful if the person can figure out where the leak is, and the best thing to do is immediately turn off that customer valve and then go on the hunt to find the leak," he noted. "If you have no water, you know you have a major leak somewhere, so get that water turned off."

How leaks are addressed depends largely on their location. If the leak happens anywhere between the meter and the house or inside the house, it is the customer's responsibility. Getting the water turned off, identifying the general location of the leak, and calling a professional is the best course of action.

However, if there is pooling water in the road or if there's another indicator that the leak lies between the meter and the road, SRWD will handle the repair.

There are several ways a homeowner might detect a leak. Lack of water flow, pooling water, or unexpectedly high usage numbers are among the most common indicators.

For more winter weather tips, visit our website at SRWD.org.



Welcome to our new Seal Rock Water District newsletter! **The Water Drop** is designed to keep you informed about the work we're doing to provide safe, reliable water to our community. From system updates and seasonal maintenance tips to project highlights and staff insights, we'll share news and information to help you stay connected with SRWD. We also welcome your ideas for future newsletter topics, so please contact our office if you have suggestions. We hope you enjoy this premiere edition! - Adam Denlinger, General Manager

Renee Card joins SRWD as new finance manager

With extensive experience in public finance and accounting, Renee Card joined Seal Rock Water District this month as our new finance manager.

Throughout her career in finance, she has skillfully overseen complex budgets, prepared financial reports, and managed audit processes.

For the past six years, Card has worked in government finance and will bring that experience into her role at SRWD.

“With government finance, my ultimate goal is always a clean audit and a good budget,” she explained. “Those will be my two primary objectives.”

SRWD General Manager Adam Denlinger spoke highly of Card upon her selection.



“Renee’s professional experience, attention to detail, and collaborative approach make her an excellent fit for the district and our commitment to responsible financial stewardship,” he said. “We are excited to have her join the SRWD team and look forward to the knowledge and energy she will bring to this important role.”

A native of Virginia, Card moved to Oregon in 2016 and resides in Waldport with her spouse. She has two adult children and her growing family now includes granddaughters Rory (4) and Lizzie, who is pictured here on her December 2024 birthday.

A well-earned retirement for Joy King-Cortes



Dating back to 1993 when she was first hired as a part-time utility billing clerk, Joy King-Cortes has played an important role at Seal Rock Water District. Over the ensuing decades, her work evolved and her title changed, ultimately leading her to the role of Office/Finance Manager.

By the end of this year, however, she will have a new title: retiree. As part of the team that guided SRWD through many important changes and milestones, King-Cortes will shift her focus to travel, quilting, and gardening. But first, she took time to share her thoughts about her career at SRWD.

“I enjoy my job and the growth I have experienced here,” she began. “It is a small organization with few employees, so each wears several hats, so to speak. We have an excellent group of employees and I enjoy working with a dedicated staff. It has also been rewarding to serve the customers with an essential commodity – water!”

General Manager Adam Denlinger described her impact on the organization, saying “Over the years, Joy has been so much more than a numbers expert. She’s been a steady, trusted presence whose calm leadership and deep knowledge have guided the district through both financial challenges and growth.”

We asked King-Cortes to reflect on the changes that have occurred during her tenure and the list was impressive.

“So much has changed for the better from 1993 to 2025,” she said, providing a few highlights.

- In 1993, there were 1,976 meters read manually once a month. Now we have 2,694 smart meters connected to a communication system that allows us to read water usage data remotely, often in real-time.
- The district used to buy treated water from the City of Toledo. Now the district has a state-of-the-art water treatment plant.
- The district used to rent its shop and office facilities, but now it owns its administrative and shop facilities. We also used to rent equipment to install pipes or fix leaks, but now the district owns the equipment.

One thing that won’t change in retirement is the place she calls home. “We have owned a house in Waldport for 37 years now, so the plan is to stay in the area,” she said.

“Seal Rock Water District is stronger because of Joy’s hard work and dedication. While we will miss her greatly, we’re excited to celebrate her well-earned retirement and wish her all the happiness in this next chapter of life,” Denlinger added.

Water Quality Q&A: What You Need to Know About Your Drinking Water

Changes in weather can affect how your drinking water tastes and smells. You might notice an “earthy” flavor during the summer or wonder how your water is treated. Everyone has questions about their home’s water—and we have answers.

We sat down with SRWD General Manager Adam Denlinger to discuss six of the most common questions our customers ask.



Lead Water Treatment Plant Operator Larry Estes monitors water quality throughout the system

1. Why does my water taste different than it did a few years ago?

Your water tastes different today because our primary source changed. Since the mid-1970s, SRWD purchased treated water from the City of Toledo. Three years ago, we switched to Beaver Creek as our main water source.

For decades, Toledo’s water traveled through a nine-mile system that naturally cooled it. Now, our water travels just a mile and a half before it reaches our plant for treatment. The shorter route means the water can be warmer during certain times of year, which affects taste and smell—but rest assured, it still meets all state and federal safe drinking water standards.

2. Why do I sometimes notice a chlorine smell or an “earthy” taste?

Water temperature plays a big role in taste and smell. During the warmer months, disinfectants—such as chlorine—are more noticeable even when we use the exact same amount.

So, if your water smells slightly earthy or you detect a chlorine scent, it’s most likely due to seasonal temperature changes, not a difference in water quality. All safety and quality standards are consistently met throughout the year.

3. How much disinfectant is in our water?

Our disinfectant levels remain very stable. The state allows up to 4 parts per million (ppm), but our system typically stays between 1 and 1.25 ppm—well below the limit.

When chlorine taste or odor becomes noticeable, it’s usually because warmer water makes it easier to detect, not because there’s more chlorine. We monitor dozens of sampling points throughout the system to ensure the disinfectant level always stays safe and effective.

4. If I have concerns about my water, what should I do?

If something about your water seems different, please call our office right away. Most of the time, changes are seasonal—but we take every concern seriously.

Our team will test your water and check the local lines. Sometimes the solution is as simple as flushing a water line, especially in areas where pipes end rather than loop. These lines are flushed twice a year as part of routine maintenance, but occasionally, they may need extra attention.

Did you know...

...that Seal Rock Water District was deemed an “Outstanding Performer” by the Oregon Health Authority’s Drinking Water Services division? After an extensive evaluation of the entire water system in 2023, SRWD was recognized for our well-operated system. This acknowledgement means the system is reviewed by the state every five years. (Other systems must undergo evaluation every three years.) Our next review will occur in 2028.



5. Is there something I can do to improve my water at home?

Yes—here are a few simple steps that can help:

- Flush your faucets: If your home has been unoccupied, let water run for 5–10 minutes to refresh the lines.
- Maintain your water heater: Sediment buildup can affect water taste; follow your manufacturer’s instructions or consult a local plumber for maintenance or draining.
- Check older plumbing: Aging pipes can sometimes contribute to taste or odor issues.

6. How can I learn more about how my water is treated?

Visit our website to read the Annual Water Quality Report, which compares our results to federal and state drinking water standards. It’s the best way to learn where your water comes from and how we keep it safe and reliable.



METER READING 101: How to monitor your water usage

Knowing the basics of how to read the water meter can help customers better understand their bills, monitor their water consumption, and even detect leaks. Please take a moment to learn how to read the meter and then put this knowledge into practice by reviewing your own numbers.



Open the lid to activate the display. This is the meter reading and it represents the total gallons that have flowed through the meter since it was installed. In this picture, the reading of 9,998.30 represents the number of gallons this meter registered from its initial installation.

NOW... close the lid tight for a few seconds and then reopen. A new number will appear.



The second image is the flow view – shown here at 000,000.000 since there is no water flowing. Any other numbers would indicate the actual water flowing per minute through your system, measured in gallons. The numbers will flash on and then off because the flow is not always the same.

Remember that the flow number is PER MINUTE so calculating the amount of water in gallons means you must multiply by 60 to get the per hour figure.

Reminder

Keep the path that water lines travel from the road to your water meter clear. There can be no obstructions (landscaping, shrubbery, structures) that would delay digging to reach water lines in the case of an emergency.