

# CURRENTS

## WATER MAIN WORK CONTINUES IN HIGHLAND PARK

Upgrading the largest water pipes serving Highland Park reservoir



Contractor crews from Pure Technologies set up equipment around water main work area



Sonar tool lowered into the pipe to detect leaks

This spring, we started a large-scale infrastructure upgrade project in preparation for future improvements. One of these projects will assess the condition of two of our largest water mains, called “rising mains,” that move water from our Water Treatment Plant in Aspinwall, through the Pittsburgh Zoo, and to the covered reservoir in Highland Park. Our crews have traversed through hillsides and near hyena enclosures as they unearth the 48 and 50-inch mains looking for signs of age.

As work at the Water Treatment Plant and other locations in the distribution system begin in the coming years, the path treated drinking water takes through the system will change. More water will move through the covered Highland Park reservoirs when parts of the system go down for maintenance. For this reason, these large water mains need

to be in their best condition to accommodate an increase in flow. To ensure this, crews began with remote-access leak detection through sonar technology by checking the reports for sonar waves. Waves that are longer or higher indicate a leak or air pocket in the pipes. They will also take some camera footage of the inside of the pipes for more data. Finally, in July, the pipes will be drained and experts will do a full visual inspection to look for any cracks or structural deficiencies.

All this work will eventually inform a design for the repair or replacement of the pipes, depending on their condition. Repair or replacement work is anticipated to take place in 2021. Investigation, design, and construction of these repairs will cost an estimated \$23 million and ensure reliable service to our customers as

we move on to more large-scale water distribution projects.

“We are grateful that this project could continue with minimal-to-no delays from COVID-19 due to its importance,” said Executive Director Robert A. Weimar.

“This is year one of a multi-year effort to do proactive maintenance on these large pieces of our water distribution system that are vital to reliable water service.”

PWSA Executive Director  
Robert A. Weimar

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## COMING UP:

### 2020 Board Meetings

June 26

July 24

No August Meeting

September 25

October 23

November 20

December 18

Meetings begin at 10:00 am at 1200 Penn Avenue and are open to the public. Due to COVID-19, the May meeting may be held via teleconference. Visit [pgh2o.com/events-meetings](http://pgh2o.com/events-meetings) for the most updated information.

### Four Mile Run Community Meeting

June 18

Virtual meeting: 6:30 pm

### Thomas and McPherson Stormwater Meeting

June 25

Virtual meeting: 6:30 pm

Due to restrictions on events from COVID-19, June meetings may not be held in person. For the most updated information, please visit our website at [pgh2o.com/events-meetings](http://pgh2o.com/events-meetings)

# RAW TALK

By Executive Director Robert A. Weimar

## A Fond Farewell: Steady Rebuilding Leads to a Strong Future Ahead!



As of May 31st, I am stepping down from my life as PWSA's Executive Director, though I will remain available as a part time employee to help whenever I can. I do so with the knowledge that our Authority will sustain and continuously improve for the benefit of Pittsburgh and the region. I am proud that we have reached several critically important goals during my tenure. We have addressed, or are correcting, the most severe deficiencies of the water and sewer systems; developed an essential Water Quality Program to mitigate river overflows; localized street flooding and sewer backups; and raised the bar for project delivery from a meager \$10 million per year to more than \$100 million last year—with much more to come!

We developed one of the most sophisticated and successful lead service line replacement programs in the United States. We restored the “r’s” (redundancy and resilience) for the entire water and sewer system. We have met and successfully addressed every challenge from the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Our billing, customer service representatives, field operations staff, and managers are being recognized for their competencies and stellar delivery.

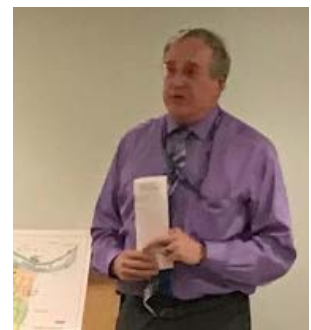
And, who can forget the virus that forced us to change overnight—our workforce adjusted without missing a beat.

We are proud that we are regaining your confidence to deliver essential services—the most important triumph for a utility. Most importantly, we did all this as a publicly-owned and controlled agency—a notable achievement in today's utility landscape. For our success, we also owe a debt of gratitude to the Board of Directors and you as our customers for your confidence in us, and providing the financial support essential to improve PWSA. I also thank Mayor Peduto and the City Team for their critical encouragement and assistance. These accomplishments make me extremely proud to have worked to make GSD happen!

One thing that has been critically important for PWSA and it's staff to succeed in the long term is steady, consistent leadership. I am proud to pass the torch to Will Pickering as of June 1st. He has served as a dedicated director of our Public Affairs Department and as my deputy executive

director, and has been an essential part of our leadership team as we navigated through rough waters. I leave the Authority in good hands. My best wishes to everyone as we continue to make PWSA one of the best utilities possible.

But it is time for me to go home—to New Hampshire. My wife and I are now at the age when most couples retire to the porch swing. I will miss my time in Pittsburgh. Thank you for letting me be part of the Pittsburgh family. I will be a Pittsburgher forevermore!





# PWSA Participates in Virtual Town Halls on Assistance Programs During COVID-19

## State and Local officials host online meetings with utility experts

Your local officials are working hard in collaboration with us and other local utilities to educate customers on financial assistance that is available during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On May 7th, PWSA Deputy Executive Director Will Pickering participated in Pennsylvania State Senator Jay Costa's COVID Conversations webinar series with CEO and President of Duquesne Light Steve Malnight, and Co-Founder and CEO of Module Brian Gaudio. Will discussed amendments we have made to our Customer Assistance Programs and how we have adapted to keep our workforce and customers safe as we continue to execute our mission of providing our customers with safe and reliable water and sewer service. An example of our approach to safety is our existing policy of mandatory health screenings for our field staff. In addition, Will explained how we are planning to move forward toward a "new normal" as guidelines on matters including non-emergency construction and telework are gradually relaxed. The program is accessible to watch online at [senatorcosta.com/covid-conversations-housing-and-utilities-in-a-health-crisis/](https://senatorcosta.com/covid-conversations-housing-and-utilities-in-a-health-crisis/).

The Pittsburgh Black Elected Officials Coalition hosted a Facebook Live Utilities Town Hall on March 21st. PA State Representatives Ed Gainey and Jake Wheatley, Allegheny County Councilman DeWitt Walton, and City of Pittsburgh Councilmen Rev. Ricky Burgess and Daniel Lavelle are the members of this Coalition.

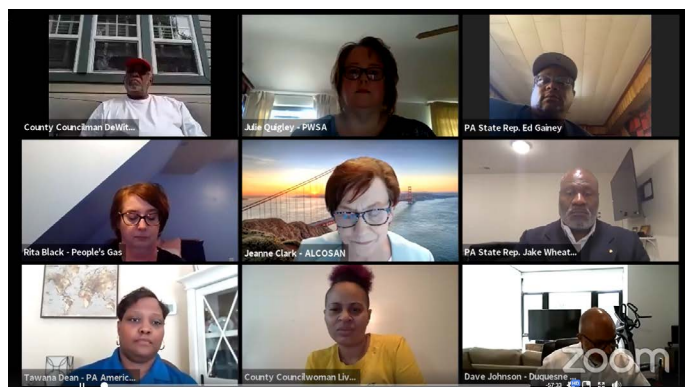
Experts from all of the Pittsburgh utilities attended this virtual town hall and PWSA Director of Administration Julie Quigley spoke about the changes made to our programs. The town hall video is accessible to watch online at [facebook.com/PittsburghBlackOfficials/live\\_videos](https://facebook.com/PittsburghBlackOfficials/live_videos).

As part of our response to the spread of COVID-19, we have extended our Shut Off Moratorium until July 1, 2020, and waived the income qualification criteria to ensure that no customer is without water service during the pandemic. We also waived the requirement that Bill Discount Program participants recertify their income with Dollar Energy Fund every twelve months, and the requirement that residential customers make a sincere effort payment of \$150 (\$75 for senior citizens) before they can access cash assistance grants. These two requirements have been waived through the end of 2020.

We understand that this is a difficult time for many households. If you have experienced a recent loss in income due to the COVID-19 pandemic, you may now qualify for our Customer Assistance Programs. Call us today at 412-255-2423 (press 5) to see if you're eligible for help paying your monthly water bill. Learn more by visiting [pgh2o.com/CAP](https://pgh2o.com/CAP).



PA Senator Jay Costa (left) discusses the utility sector's response to COVID-19 with PWSA Deputy Executive Director Will Pickering (bottom right) and Duquesne Light CEO and President Steve Malnight (top right).



Utility experts and elected officials gather for a virtual town hall about assistance programs for customers. PWSA Director of Administration Julie Quigley (top center)

## Community Input Remains Essential to Stormwater Projects

Although we cannot meet in person, technology brings us together for meaningful discussions about local stormwater projects.

On Wednesday, May 20th, we hosted a virtual community meeting to share information about the design of a stormwater project at the Martin Luther King, Jr./Warren K. Branch Park in Uptown.

This park is currently used as a community garden and is one of the few flat surfaces in a very hilly part of Pittsburgh — making it an ideal location to manage stormwater.

About 20 people attended the meeting. Representatives from Grow Pittsburgh, a nonprofit that serves as a resource and guide for gardeners and urban farmers, had questions about how the community garden will be restored. Nearby residents asked specific questions about the design of the project and how it may impact neighborhoods below the park. We are continuing to advance the design and are scheduling a follow up meeting with Grow Pittsburgh.

We appreciate everyone's willingness to use technology and engage in a virtual space to maintain a dialogue about these important infrastructure projects.



This stormwater project is located between Kirkpatrick Street and Bentley Drive. By constructing a series of underground storage tanks, the project will help to reduce stormwater runoff from uphill neighborhoods and better manage 115 million gallons of combined sewage overflowing into the Monongahela River each year.



## PWSA IN THE COMMUNITY

**Due to restrictions on events from COVID-19, in-person meetings have been suspended. We look forward to engaging with our customers and neighbors after we pull through this difficult time together.**

### Senator Jay Costa Covid Conversations: Housing and Utilities

May 7

[senatorcosta.com/covid-conversations-housing-and-utilities-in-a-health-crisis/](https://senatorcosta.com/covid-conversations-housing-and-utilities-in-a-health-crisis/)

### Greystone Drive Water Main Project

May 12

*Virtual Community Meeting*

### Martin Luther King Jr./Warren K Branch Park Stormwater Improvement Project

May 20

*Virtual Community Meeting*

### The Pittsburgh Black Elected Officials Coalition Facebook Live Utilities Town Hall

May 21

[facebook.com/PittsburghBlackOfficials/live\\_videos](https://facebook.com/PittsburghBlackOfficials/live_videos)

### Highland Park Community Council

May 21

*Virtual Community Meeting*

**To schedule a future presentation in your community, go to:**  
**[pgh2o.com/request-us-event](https://pgh2o.com/request-us-event)**



## Guidance on Reopening for Building Owners and Managers

Flushing plumbing in dormant buildings ensures water quality.

As Pittsburgh businesses prepare to reopen, property owners may be readying their buildings for occupancy. Under normal operations, the regular use of water maintains water quality within the building's plumbing. When not in use, the water becomes stagnant and could result in an increase in toxic metals from pipe corrosion, reduction of disinfectant, or lack of maintenance of essential water system components.

A water management plan is an essential step in the process of reopening a business to employees and the public. Each building system is unique, and building owners may want to consult a professional to determine any necessary actions. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Environmental Science and Policy Research Institute (ESPRI), and the International Code Council (ICC) each offer guidance on how to lessen the risks associated with water

systems within buildings that have been temporarily vacant.

Ensure that your water system is safe to use after a prolonged shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water.

We monitor disinfectant levels and proactively flush the public distribution system to maintain water quality for building systems. Our drinking water treatment protocol includes filtration and disinfection procedures that are effective in removing viruses. Our water is safe to drink and to use for personal hygiene activities.

Internal plumbing and building system questions can be directed to the Allegheny County Health Department (ACHD) Plumbing Division. Water treatment questions can be directed to PWSA.

## Cheaper, Cleaner Electricity

A sustainability win for Pittsburgh!

We are proud to be part of the Western Pennsylvania Energy Consortium (WPEC). This group of more than 20 agencies has used their collective bargaining power to generate lower energy costs for the Pittsburgh region for nearly 12 years. Now, they are boldly showing their leadership in sustainability by moving to 100% renewable energy.



The new, 12-month agreement with Direct Energy significantly reduces our reliance on fossil fuels. Now, the infrastructure, facilities, and operations that are needed every day throughout the Pittsburgh region will run on clean energy – most of which is generated from a solar farm near State College, Pennsylvania.

For PWSA, it takes an enormous amount of energy to treat and distribute water. This new agreement reduces our carbon footprint and will save nearly \$250,000 in annual energy costs. By using our purchasing power as part of the WPEC to support renewable sources, we can help to ensure cleaner water, while also improving air quality, reducing carbon emissions, and attaining our 2030 sustainability goals.



## Media and Press Releases

### MEDIA COVERAGE

**PWSA: Work To Resume On Massive Downtown Sinkhole, Street Expected To Open By Late June, *KDKA TV***

**Water Utilities Continue Battle Against Lead In Their Systems, *Engineering News Record***

**What you can do to lower those mounting utility bills during COVID-19 pandemic, *WPXI***

**PWSA: Water in shuttered buildings could contain contaminants like Legionella, *Trib-Live***

**PWSA extends shutoff moratorium until July 1, loosens requirements for financial assistance, *Post-Gazette***

**Water utilities reach students at home with online learning resources, *American Water Works Journal***

### PRESS RELEASES

**PWSA Construction Projects Resume Normal Schedule, *May 26***

**PWSA Announces Will Pickering as New Executive Director, *May 22***

**PWSA Contractors will Restore 10th Street Sinkhole as Construction Resumes, *May 15***

**Expand Your Water IQ!, *April 28***

## Employee Spotlight

Our Construction Management Team consisting of Senior Manager of Construction Don Gawne and Project Managers Manda Metzger, Rasheed “Tunde” Ibrahim, and John Waida, use their expertise to ensure the successful completion of a wide variety of infrastructure improvement projects.

Currently, they are hard at work after we recently received the go-ahead from regulatory officials to resume non-emergency construction. Said work includes initiatives such as: replacing small diameter water mains at an annual rate of 20 miles of pipe per year; replacing a considerable amount of storm drains from our network of approximately 24,500; and restoring street and sidewalks, especially during warm weather when asphalt plants are open.

**Senior Manager of Construction Don Gawne** made the transition from a consultant to Senior Manager of Construction in late 2019. In his role with PWSA, he consults with his departmental colleagues in order to keep tabs on the progress of a variety of projects that aim to improve the efficiency of our water and sewer infrastructure. As a proponent of the “work smarter not harder” approach to Getting Stuff Done, Don remarked that he reminds himself of the quote “Is the juice really worth the squeeze?” when ranking the many projects on the Team’s docket in terms of criticality.



Senior Manager of Construction Don Gawne (left) and Project Manager Manda Metzger (right)

**Project Manager Manda Metzger** manages multiple construction projects at any given time, including contracts for storm drain replacement, street and sidewalk restoration, and others. The now-complete Smallman Street Water and Sewer Reconstruction Project is one of her most prominent projects. It included the replacement of over 7,000 feet of water line, storm sewer, and sanitary sewer over the course of a year. Manda said, “I am responsible for the accuracy and accountability of specific project timelines, resources, and expenditures.”



Project Manager Rasheed “Tunde” Ibrahim

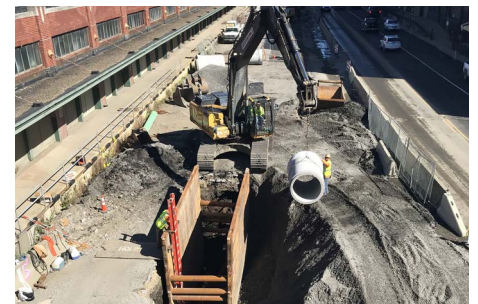
**Project Manager Rasheed “Tunde” Ibrahim** manages urgent contracts and other pipe installation projects. He is currently tasked with project initiation, project monitoring and control, and project closeout. “In other words, I track the project finances, schedules, and documentation and bring the project to a close,” said Tunde.

**Project Manager John Waida** was hired this spring after having previously served as one of our consultants. “Needless to say, the transition has been different. I have yet to sit at my desk in the office,” said John. His

current role at PWSA is to assist with urgent water and sewer repair contracts. Other recent projects John is involved with include the Lanpher Rising Main Project and the 10th Street Sinkhole Restoration. He also visits other urgent sites to check progress and resolve site issues.



Project Manager John Waida



Above: Contractor crews working on the now-complete Smallman Street Water and Sewer Reconstruction Project Below: Installation of the Lanpher Rising Main



## May 2020 Gold Drop Awardees:



We are applauding our employees' exceptional efforts with a small but significant token of appreciation, the PGH2O Gold Drop. The PGH2O Gold Drop is a pin in the shape of a water drop that symbolizes the shining example each individual is within the Authority. These selfless individuals set a high standard and inspire our team to go above and beyond expectations. Congratulations to the following employees:

**Matt Galiotto**, *Inventory Control Specialist 2*

**Devan Walters**, *nventory Control Specialist*

**Ramika Fields**, *Senior Training Coordinator*

**Kenneth Glover** *Account Clerk*

**Shannon Deasy**, *Dispatcher*

**Melissa Pail**, *Dispatcher*

**Amber Smith**, *Dispatcher*

**Deborah Kenney**, *Dispatcher*

**Kenneth Welsh**, *Vactor Operator*

**Andrew Hildebrand**, *Vactor Operator*

**Brian Randall** , *Laborer*

**Garrett Donnelly** , *Laborer*

**Tahajud Ghafoor** , *Laborer*

**Jason Auge**, *T.V. Truck Specialist*

**Teresa Brown**, *T.V. Truck Specialist*

## Job Postings

Interested in working with us?  
PWSA is looking for dedicated people to join our team.

**Senior Health and Safety Manager**  
Administration

**Project Manager**  
Engineering & Construction

**Associate Project Manager**  
Engineering & Construction

**Inspector II**  
Engineering & Construction

**Plant Operator**  
Water Quality & Production

**Electrician**  
Water Quality & Production

**Steamfitter**  
Field Operations

**Plumber**  
Field Operations

**Customer Service Representative  
(Full-time and Part-time)**  
Customer Service

Visit [pgh2o.com/about-us/careers](https://pgh2o.com/about-us/careers) to learn more.



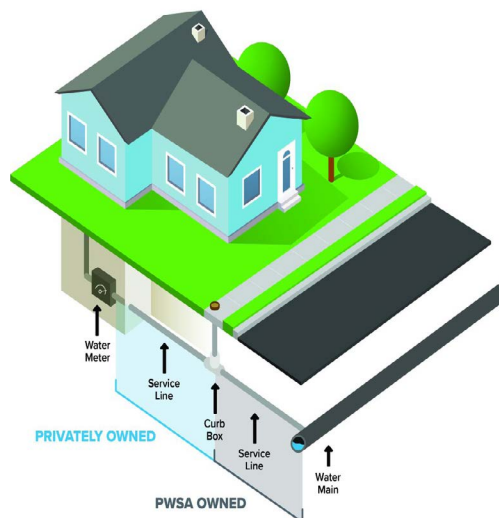
## Thousands More Lead Lines to be Replaced During Water Main Project

As water mains are replaced, all lead service lines will be replaced with it.

As restrictions on construction work due to the COVID-19 pandemic are reduced, we will continue to upgrade infrastructure and reduce the risk of lead in drinking water through an aggressive water main replacement program. The program is made possible through a \$65 million low interest loan from the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (PENNVEST). This is the single largest drinking water funding offer in PENNVEST's thirty-one year history.

The award will support the first phase of a small diameter main replacement plan for our service area, which will total more than \$326 million upon completion. Initial improvements financed by this PENNVEST award include the replacement of just under 80,000 feet of aging water distribution mains, along with the publicly owned portions of more than 2,000 water service lines, including approximately 850 lead public service lines. That totals over 15 miles of old pipe!

Where the private portion of the service line is also lead, it will be replaced at no cost to the resident. To ensure that we are replacing as many private service lines in the water system as possible and to avoid the risk of a harmful partial lead line replacement, we agreed to specific protocols mandated by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC). Customers who may have a lead service line attached to the water main being



replaced are first contacted via an informational packet and are asked to sign an agreement allowing us to come onto their property to replace the private lead service line.

"We're eager to enter this new phase of infrastructure renewal. Not only will we

remove lead from our water distribution system, but we'll be improving water quality and reliability by installing miles of new water mains," said Executive Director Robert A. Weimar. "This program will continue to avoid potentially harmful partial lead line replacements by offering no-cost private lead line replacement when replacing adjacent water mains," he continued.

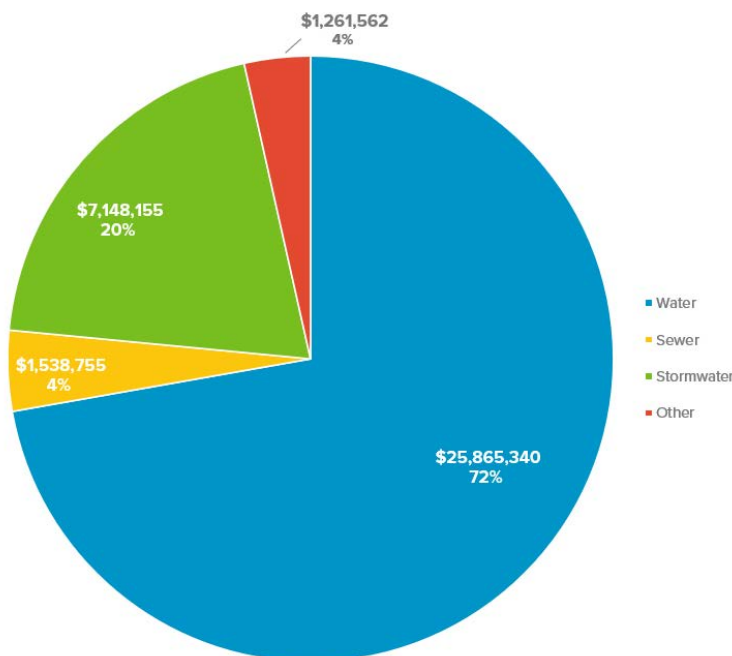
To learn more about our lead service line replacement program, orthophosphate treatment to reduce lead levels in drinking water, and more, visit [lead.pgh2o.com](http://lead.pgh2o.com).

## 2020 Capital Spending

Amounts reflect total expenditures from January 1 - May 26, 2020

- Water
- Sewer
- Stormwater
- Other

**TOTAL: \$35,813,813**







# WATER WISE

## Reduce Water Waste Outdoors and Save Money

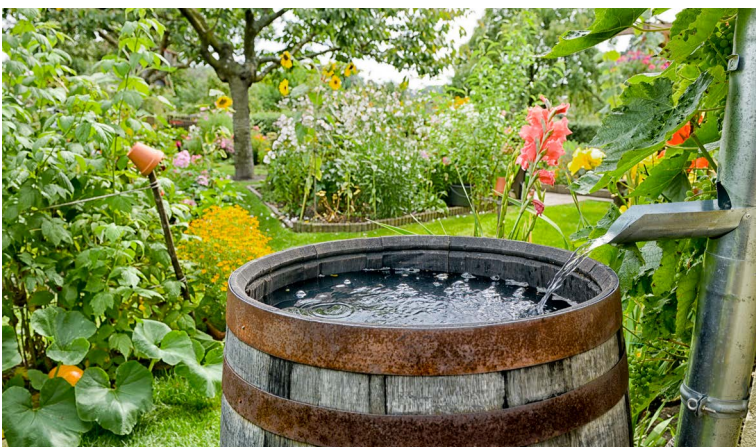
With summer around the corner, you may be using more water than usual outdoors. You can track your household's real-time water usage on our online portal and sign up to receive alerts when there is a spike in water usage.

Leaking hoses, irrigation systems, or spigots can waste a lot of water, so detecting and repairing outdoor leaks can help you reduce your water bills this growing season.

Practicing the following water conservation actions outdoors can also help you save money:

- Sweep your sidewalk, steps, and driveway instead of hosing off those areas.
- Water your plants in the morning or early evening to reduce water lost to evaporation.
- Use an automatic shut-off nozzle for your gardening hose to control the flow.
- Set sprinklers to water the lawn or garden only – not the street or sidewalk.
- Wash your car using water from a bucket over your lawn or a commercial car wash that recycles water.

Learn more at [pgh2o.com/waterconservation](http://pgh2o.com/waterconservation).



All floods are not the same. Learn the difference.

As we experience more intense storms in Pittsburgh, we see more frequent sewer overflows and floods. Our goal is to better manage stormwater so that it doesn't overwhelm the capacity of the sewers, causing basement backups, pollution flowing into our rivers, or flooded roads.

We all need to learn about and practice flood safety, especially since flash floods can occur with little to no warning. Just six inches of fast-moving floodwater can knock over and carry away an adult, and 12 inches can carry away a car. It is impossible to know how deep floodwaters are just by looking at them. If you encounter floodwaters, Turn Around, Don't Drown.

There are three common types of flooding in Pittsburgh:

- **Stream and river flooding** occurs when rainfall or snowmelt causes water levels to rise up over the top of the channel's banks. Flood risk is very high in a flood plain, an area of low-lying land next to a stream or river.
- **Overland flooding** occurs when water runs across the land after excessive rainfall or snowmelt, covering areas that may not even be near a stream or river. Floodwaters can submerge and damage roads, sidewalks, buildings, and basements.
- **Basement sewage backups** occur when a private or public sewer system is blocked, broken, or overwhelmed by heavy rainfall or snowmelt. If you see sewage pooling in your home, please immediately call our 24/7 Dispatch at 412-255-2423 (Press 1).

Learn more at [pgh2o.com/flood-preparedness](http://pgh2o.com/flood-preparedness).



## Customer Assistance Program

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

For more information about our programs, including the Winter Shut-off Moratorium, Bill Discount, Cash Assistance, and Free Private Lead Line Replacements, please visit [pgh2o.com/CAP](http://pgh2o.com/CAP) or call Dollar Energy Fund at 866.762.2348.



## 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?

Call PWSA Customer Service: 412.255.2423 (Press 5)

Or visit our website: [pgh2o.com/pay](http://pgh2o.com/pay)

*PWSA is committed to maintaining and protecting the confidentiality and privacy of our customers and will not share your information with third party vendors.*

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Margaret Lanier  
*Vice Chairperson*

Jim Turner  
*Secretary*

Michael Domach  
*Member*

Erika Strassburger  
*Member*

Chatón Turner  
*Member*

## Currents Contributors

Robert A. Weimar  
*Executive Director*

Will Pickering  
*Deputy Executive Director*

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*Industry Relations Manager*

Rachel Rampa  
*Senior Public Affairs Coordinator*

Rebecca Zito  
*Communications Project Manager*

Mora McLaughlin  
*Construction Communications Project Manager*

Elaine Hinrichs  
*Education and Outreach Associate*

Hali Hetz  
*Public Affairs Associate*

Nick Letzkus  
*Public Affairs Associate*

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### Customer Service

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**F** 412.255.2475  
[info@pgh2o.com](mailto:info@pgh2o.com)

### Emergency Dispatch

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Available 24/7