

CURRENTS

This August, we're celebrating our sewer system!



Original sewer pipe construction, 1914.

Sewers are crucial to the day-to-day functions of any community, but many don't think about them while taking a walk around the neighborhood or driving to work. They carry wastewater, or sewage, from peoples' homes and businesses as well as 70% of the city's stormwater, collected via the storm drains on many city streets. As PWSA's sewers age, it is crucial that we proactively maintain or replace sewers to ensure reliable service for our customers.

The first sewers in Pittsburgh were built in the 1840s to manage wastewater and stormwater flows in present-day Shadyside and Oakland. By 1908, more than 390 miles of underground sewer lines were in place. Today, our system contains a whopping 1,200 miles of sewers! Most of these sewer pipes are "combined," meaning they carry both wastewater and stormwater in the same pipe. Our sewers are supposed to move all wastewater and stormwater in combined sewer pipes to a treatment plant before releasing the water back into the environment. But when our

sewers overflow, raw sewage and polluted water flow into our creeks and rivers. Sewer overflows can also cause flooding and basement backups for customers. By ensuring that water is treated first, we cut down on pollution for us and our downstream neighbors.

Everyone can do their part to reduce strain on the sewer systems in their neighborhoods. Fats, oils, and grease from cooking, also known as FOGs, can create serious problems in the sewer system when they go down the drain. They harden inside household pipes and public sewers, restricting the flow of wastewater. These blockages are a leading cause of sewage backups in buildings, which result in high costs for cleanup and repairs. If FOG buildup gets bad enough, sewage can even overflow into yards, streets, and storm drains, contaminating waterways and causing public health hazards. Only #1, #2, and toilet paper should go down the drain to ensure the health of our sewers. Even "flushable" wipes are not really flushable and are not biodegradable.

We are also projected to invest over \$19 million in our sewer system in 2021. By proactively maintaining our sewers, we avoid failures, which can cause sinkholes, basement backups, and loss of sewer service for customers. By lining the inside of miles of sewer pipe per year, we extend the life of our sewers before they break and avoid disruption to the neighborhood from major construction. For sewers that require more attention, we complete replacements and relocations where needed to provide reliable sewer service to our customers and avoid even more costly failures in the future.

For more information on how we maintain our sewer system, visit Pgh2o.com/sewer.

To learn about sewer rehabilitation projects near you, view our interactive project map by visiting pgh2o.com/search-all-projects.

To learn how you can reduce stormwater flooding and pollution, visit Pgh2o.com/reducing-stormwater-pollution.

Next Board Meeting: August 27

For a complete list of PWSA's board and community meetings, please visit Pgh2o.com/events-meetings.

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

To learn more about our sewers during the month of August, follow us on Twitter [@pgh2o](https://twitter.com/pgh2o).



A previous sewer lining project on Ivondale Street. Sewer liners are slid inside the sewer via manholes.

Join our email list to get the latest news and updates.

Signing up is simple at pgh2o.com/subscribe.





Customer Assistance Programs

Supporting our customers in need

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.

- **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 for customers who are at or below 150% of FPL.
- **Flexible Payment Plans:** We offer payment plans for those earning between 250% and 300% of the federal poverty level (FPL) to pay their balance over one to five years without accruing interest or paying additional fees.
- **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.

For more information about the Customer Assistance Program, please visit 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.

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
Or call PWSA Customer Service: **412.255.2423 (Press 5)**

Enroll in eBilling

Use our paperless billing and payment portal to receive and pay your bill and manage your PGH2O account from your desktop or phone. Visit Pgh2o.com/ebilling to enroll.

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Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Customer Service
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Emergency Dispatch
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Available 24/7

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WATER WISE

Heat Wave Tips!



When heat waves strike, it is important to take care of yourself, loved ones, neighbors, and your property. Our bodies need water and regulated temperatures to function properly. Hot or humid weather requires extra water intake, even before you feel thirsty. When outside or without air conditioning, you need to find ways to stay cool to prevent heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat waves often lead to increased water use, so reducing water wasted outdoors by evaporation or overwatering will help save money on your bills. Follow these tips.

- **Hydrate!** Drink extra water to make up for fluid lost through sweat. Keep a pitcher of tap water in the fridge so you can easily pour cold glasses of water. Put out extra water for your pets.
- **Stay cool using the power of water.** Use a spray bottle with cold water to spritz yourself. Wear wet towels or bandannas on your shoulders or head, or fill a bucket and soak your feet.
- **Water smart.** Water your plants or lawn in the morning or early evening. Use an automatic shut-off nozzle for your gardening hose to control the flow.
- **Set sprinklers properly.** Water the garden or lawn only – not the street or sidewalk. Set sprinklers to water low to the ground or invest in drip irrigation, to avoid water evaporating before it hits the soil.
- **Align your playtime and watering needs.** When kids want to cool off, use the sprinkler in an area of the lawn that needs water or have them play when you're already watering.
- **Do not open fire hydrants.** It is illegal to open hydrants without permission. An open hydrant decreases water pressure and could present a safety issue if there were a fire nearby.
- **Cover the pool.** If you have a backyard pool, cover it when not in use to make sure the water stays in it instead of evaporating.