**Preventing Frozen Pipes**

With winter on the way, take time to safeguard pipes in and around your home that could be damaged by freezing weather. Before the onset of cold weather, prevent freezing of water supply lines and pipes by following these recommendations:

- **Drain water from swimming pool and water sprinkler supply lines following manufacturer or installer directions.** Do not put antifreeze in these lines unless directed. Antifreeze is environmentally harmful, and is dangerous to humans, pets, wildlife, and landscaping.
- **Remove, drain, and store hoses used outdoors.** Insulate outside hose bibs from freezing temperatures.
- **Check around the home for areas where water supply lines are located in unprotected (not insulated) areas.** Look in the basement, crawl space, attic, garage, and under kitchen and bathroom cabinets. Both hot and cold water pipes in these areas should be insulated.
- **Consider installing specific products made to insulate water pipes in areas that usually do not have frequent or prolonged temperatures below freezing.**

**During Cold Weather, Take Preventative Action**

During freezing weather, keep garage doors closed if there are water supply lines in the garage. If you will be going away during freezing weather, before the onset of cold weather,

**Apply heat until full water pressure is restored.** If you are unable to locate the frozen area, if the frozen area is not accessible, exterior walls or where your water service enters your home through the foundation.

**Apply heat to the section of pipe using an electric heating pad wrapped around the pipe, an electric hair dryer, a portable heater, kerosene or propane heater, or electric flame devices.**

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**Check all other faucets in your home to find out if you have additional frozen pipes.** If one pipe freezes, others may freeze, too.

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**2017 REGULAR BOARD MEETINGS**

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<th>January</th>
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Board meetings generally occur on the second and fourth Monday of each month. The date marked (T) takes place on a Tuesday.

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**Many Voices Can Make a Difference—Thank You**

Earlier this year in August, EID customers helped defend against proposed legislation that sought to impose what would amount to a tax on water customers. The legislation, Senate Bill No. 623 by Sen. Bill Monning (D-Carmel), was searching for a funding source to address the statewide issue of safe drinking water solutions for disadvantaged communities. Similar legislation will likely be back in the future, but with the help of EID customers the proposed water tax was halted and now there is more time for the legislature to consider alternative funding options.

Senator Monning had inserted language into SB 623 that would have imposed a fee on urban retail water customers for the operations, maintenance and administration costs related to providing safe drinking water in water systems and for private well owners that rely on contaminated groundwater for drinking water supplies.

We at EID—along with many water purveyors across the state—agreed with the intent of the bill—the lack of safe drinking water in certain disadvantaged communities in California is a public health issue and a social issue that needs to be addressed.

But we felt that taxing Californians for something that is essential to life does not make sense, especially at a time when some are raising concerns about the affordability of water. To impose a statewide tax on Californians’ water bills would also total local agencies like EID into taxation entities that send money to Sacramento.

Dollars from the state’s General Fund, packaged together with ongoing federal safe drinking water funds and general obligation bond funds are a far more appropriate way to address a problem that is a key social issue for the state.

Ultimately, EID’s effort to voice our opposition to the bill in its offered form was magnified by a number of EID’s customers.

We sent out an email notification to our list of EID customers who have an email on file with their accounts asking for help in protesting this version of the bill. We asked our customers to call the relevant legislators if they agreed with our position against the water tax.

And call they did.

After that legislative session, we heard that one legislator had received more responses on this bill than anything else during the year. Legislators tend to listen when constituents contact them.

We would like to thank our customers who responded to our email notification and contacted regional legislators to voice opposition to the proposed water tax. We hope we can count on you again, when the need arises, to join your voices with ours.

If you do not have an email on file with us, please consider sending us an email at billing@eid.org with your account information and we’ll update your account. You can also give us a call to 530-622-4513 or 916-965-0930 or go to our contact website at www.eid.org/customers to update your contact information by completing the form under My Account. We use these email addresses to communicate important messages like the action on the water tax, potential water outages, The Waterfront, and other publications.

We will never share your email with third parties and will aim to only share important messages that bring increased information to our customers.

**Winter Water Conservation Reduces Sewer Bills**

The residential sewer commodity charge is based on what we call the “winter quarter average” or the water consumption during the winter months. You can potentially reduce your sewer bill for the rest of the year by conserving water during this period.

For billing cycles 1, 2, 3, or 4, the water consumption on the February bill is used to calculate the new sewer commodity charge to go into effect on the April bill.

For billing cycles 5, 6, 7, or 8, the water consumption on the January bill is used to calculate the new sewer commodity charge to go into effect on the March bill.

Look at your bill or payment coupon to find your cycle. The new commodity charge will remain in effect for one full year.
As EID gets closer to completing its yearly update to the five-year capital improvement plan, this is an important moment to think about the immense interconnected complex of infrastructure that makes EID’s services so reliable. And what it takes to keep them that way.

EID is caring for a system of diverse infrastructure sprawled over 220 square miles, a system that ranges from 500 feet in elevation in the western part of our county all the way up to 4000 feet in the Sierra Nevada range. The water system alone has 200 pressure-regulation zones and more than 1,245 miles of pipeline, 27 miles of ditches, five water treatment plants, 26 storage reservoirs, and 37 pumping stations. Our wastewater treatment and recycled water systems are equally complex and highly regulated.

With infrastructure as varied and as valuable as EID’s—nearly a billion dollars of historical value in pipes, treatment plants, a hydroelectric power plant, flumes, canals, and more—we must spend money wisely to ensure this system remains reliable.

Planning for rehabilitation or replacement of this important infrastructure is costly. But it is vital for the continued health of the infrastructure our ratepayers and community rely on every day.

EID teams examine every project to find ways to make necessary repairs more affordable, streamline project timelines, and examine every avenue to ensure that each dollar is well spent and the benefit long lasting.

We also look to very modest rate adjustments to help ensure that our system is adequately financed for these much needed repairs.

Before 2010, water rates had only risen six times in 22 years. We took a hard look at past practices and threw out the overreliance on new connection fees that were so abundant before the 2008/2009 financial crash. In the time since, EID has become leaner, more conservative, and more sustainable. And we have developed financial plans that feature modest, regular rate increases instead of the periodic ‘rate shock’ corrections of the past.

In our last Proposition 218 effort in late 2015, the district set a five-year schedule for rates to rise modestly beginning in 2016 through 2020. In December of 2016, EID’s board of directors voted to reduce that schedule slightly, to three percent per year from 2017 through 2020.

The rate adjustments amount to an average monthly increase of about $1.63 for medium water users, $1.87 for dual-plumbed customers, and $2.07 for sewer customers. And they are vital for the resilience of our long-term capital improvement plan.

The district continues to navigate the needs of expensive capital replacement costs with timing and cost impacts. We have projects upcoming that are required by the state or federal government that must be addressed and cannot be shifted to the future, where costs will likely increase.

Many people might be worried about the debt we hold. But it’s too simplistic to think of EID’s debt like the debt a consumer might hold. EID has access to low-interest debt that helps us spread the big costs for long-lived infrastructure—infrastructure that will have a useful life of 50 to 100 years—over the generations of ratepayers who will benefit by the strengthened, more resilient system that provides the services this community relies on day and night, year after year.

We have plans to issue an additional $50 million in bonds sometime in 2021 for more long-lived infrastructure, but due to the upcoming that are required by the state or federal government that must be addressed and cannot be shifted to the future, where costs will likely increase.

The 2017–2021 Capital Improvement Program will be considered by the board and adopted in November. You can find the CIP once it is adopted on our website under I Want To... > Learn more about District finances.

A Tale of Fatbergs and FOG

In September of this year, news outlets reported widely on a monstrous fatberg that was discovered in the Victorian-era sewer tunnels under Whitechapel—a neighborhood in London’s East End—by Thames Water, the utility responsible for maintaining London’s water and wastewater services.

A fatberg—the word was coined in the United Kingdom and added in 2015 to the Oxford University Press website, OxfordDictionaries.com—is defined as a very large mass of solid waste in a sewage system, consisting especially of congealed fat and personal hygiene products that have been flushed down toilets.

And this fatberg was one for the record books.

According to a Thames Water news release, the fatberg was one of the largest ever found at more than 800 feet long and weighing an estimated 130 metric tons of rock-solid wet wipes, fats and oils, and other materials.

At EID, we often put out reminders about FOG—fats, oils, and grease—and the damage it can do to our sanitary sewer system. But it’s important to remember that non-biodegradable items that are flushed down toilets and rinsed down sinks that do not break down (or do not break down fast enough) can form rock-hard blockages in the sewer system—fatbergs can occur!

Throughout the year—and especially during the holidays—people pour the byproducts of cooking down the sink drain. Fats, (cooking) oils, and grease can coat and clog pipes and cause sewer lines to back up into homes. That could mean costly clean-up and repair costs. FOG can also cause blockages further down sewer lines. And that can result in overflows or sewage backups into yards or streets, creating a public health risk.

The oil making its way to wastewater treatment plants can also disrupt treatment processes and add to the need for maintenance.

To prevent these problems, we encourage you to dispose of your leftover FOG properly, and be mindful of never flushing inappropriate things down the toilet. That means anything other than pee, poo, and (toilet) paper should not be flushed!

Here are some general suggestions that can help prevent sewer trouble for you and your neighbors:

- Place cooled cooking oil, poultry, and meat fats into sealed non-recyclable containers and discard with your regular garbage
- Use paper towels to wipe residual grease or oil off of dishes, pots, and pans before washing them then toss towels in the trash
- Do not flush wipes (even if they say flushable, they are not)
- Diapers and/or sanitary products should never go down the toilet

Visit www.eid.org/fo to review proper disposal methods for FOG and while you are there, go to the “Don’t Trash Your Drain” webpage that includes a household waste disposal chart.
As EID gets closer to completing its yearly update to the five-year capital improvement plan, this is an important moment to think about the immense interconnected complexity of infrastructure that makes EID’s services so reliable. And what it takes to keep them that way.

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With infrastructure as vast and valuable as EID’s—nearly a billion dollars of historical value in pipes, treatment plants, a hydroelectric power plant, flumes, canals, and more—we must spend money wisely to ensure this system remains reliable.

Planning for rehabilitation or replacement of this important infrastructure is costly. But it is vital for the continued health of the infrastructure our ratepayers and community rely on every day.

EID teams examine every project to find ways to make necessary repairs more affordable, streamline project timelines, and examine every avenue to ensure that each dollar is well spent and the benefit long lasting.

We also look to very modest rate adjustments to help ensure that our system is adequately financed for these much needed repairs.

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We have plans to issue an additional $50 million in bonds sometime in 2021 for more long-lived infrastructure, but due to the strength of our financial plan and conservative approach, our outstanding debt will not increase beyond the level it is at today.

Our low-cost debt—moderate according to ratings agencies who have raised EID’s credit ratings in recent years, making our strategic borrowing even more cost effective—is the kind of smart debt that keeps a capital intensive entity like El Dorado Irrigation District running. Not just this year, or over the next political cycle, but for our children’s and grandchildren’s generations and beyond.

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In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the California Accessible Public Facilities Act, and the California Public Facilities Access Act, the El Dorado Irrigation District shall make all public facilities accessible to people with disabilities. The District ADA Coordinator can be reached by phone at (530) 622-4513 or email at adaordinator@eid.org.