

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT EAST VALLEY WATER

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## **WHAT IS THE EAST VALLEY METROPOLITAN DISTRICT (EV)?**

The East Valley Metropolitan District (EV) was established in 1959 as the East Valley Water and Sanitation District. It is a governmental entity established under the State Special District statutes. It was converted to a Metropolitan District with community trash collection coordination added to its service plan in 2003. See [“About the District”](#) link on the home page for more details about the EV, the services it provides, how it is governed, funded and much more about district’s management and operations. [🔗 back to top](#)

## **WHERE DOES OUR WATER COME FROM?**

Our water comes from wells, mainly drawn from the deep Arapahoe aquifer and some water from the shallower Dawson aquifer. See [“About the District”](#) link on the home page for more details about water resources. [🔗 back to top](#)

## **I’VE HEARD GROUND WATER IS BEING DEPLETED, IS THIS A PROBLEM?**

All water sources in Colorado are under stress. Long term supply issues have been identified due to recent drought conditions and growth. Great accomplishments have been made in the last 20 years to reduce per capita water consumption through conservation efforts. The wells supplying EV have stabilized over the last several years after some initial drops around the year 2000. See [“About the District”](#) and [“About the Aquifer”](#) on the home page for more details on water supply and efforts to ensure long term sustainability. [🔗 back to top](#)

## **SHOULD OR COULD EV MERGE WITH A LARGER WATER SUPPLIER?**

EV has investigated and discussed this with neighboring agencies for years and encountered some difficult cost and/or logistical issues. However, EV continues to keep communication channels open and monitor for cost effective options to ensure the most cost effective and long term water supplies. See [“About the District”](#) link on the home page for a discussion on this topic. [🔗 back to top](#)

## **REPORTING AN OUTAGE OR OTHER WATER PROBLEM**

Phone numbers and emails are on the District’s [home web page](#). If a water outage occurs, in most cases the system automatically notifies maintenance staff. However, feel free to call the emergency contact phone number and report the outage or problem. If you encounter a water quality problem of concern, please call us as well. If you observe a line break, please definitely call us as we may not be aware of leaks until they are reported. Generally we do not call you back on reports of outages, leaks or discolored water due to the high volume of calls in these cases. NOTE: During general area power outages, a back-up generator should kick on to maintain water flow, but please avoid irrigation during power outages. [🔗 back to top](#)

## **CAN I PAY MY BILL ON-LINE or THROUGH AN AUTO PAY METHOD?**

EV does not offer any EFT (electronic funds transfers) or credit card payment at this time. Many customers use their bank’s on-line “bill pay” services as a way to streamline payments to some degree. With most bank on-line services, you can set up lists of payees, go on-line each month, enter an amount for a payee like EV and issue the payment. The bank will send a physical check in the US Mail to EV and it will be processed and deposited just like a hand written personal check. Consult your individual bank for fees that may apply, but many banks offer this service for free. Some EV customers set up their on-line bank “bill pay” service to automatically send us a check in the same amount each month according to their estimate of typical monthly charges by EV. Your EV water account will carry any overpayments as positive account balance. But be advised, if your estimated scheduled recurring payments fall short of actual EV charges, your account will carry a negative balance forward which is assessed a 3% monthly late fee. [🔗 back to top](#)

## **CAN I GET MY MONTHLY BILL VIA EMAIL?**

EV can deliver your monthly bill by email. Many customers use this service, especially those that use on-line bank “bill pay” services to pay. Save paper, time and cut environmental waste by getting your bill by email. Email or call us to sign up! [🔗 back to top](#)

## **WHY DOES EV WANT MY EMAIL?**

EV is a small water supplier and sometimes system-wide outages or other maintenance issues can impact all customers. EV can inform customers about such occurrences quickly and efficiently if we have your email. Also, billing information, important District governance topics or the annual water quality report can be more efficiently distributed via email. EV does not share emails with other agencies or businesses and makes every effort to limit emails sent. [🔗 back to top](#)

## **MY WATER RATES SEEM HIGH COMPARED TO OTHER PEOPLE I KNOW IN THE METRO AREA**

Comparing rates with surrounding areas is always difficult. Agencies like Aurora and Denver are long-time water providers. For a number of reasons, they can provide water at lower costs. (1) They were able to secure major portions of their renewable water resource needs decades ago at comparatively lower costs when there was less competition for water resources. (2) Most of their water is from surface supplies which is not only renewable, but much less expensive to produce than water from wells. Wells are simply more expensive to operate and maintain on a per gallon basis. (3) They benefit from economies-of-scale in the day-to-day operations due to their large size. East Valley's rates are actually somewhat in the middle of other similar area water providers that rely fully, or to a large extent, on wells. In fact, most neighboring well based water providers are at a minimum, ten times larger than EV, yet EV is able to maintain competitive water rates. [back to top](#)

## **WHY IS THE FLAT FEE HIGH?**

Because EV supplies water through wells, there are significant fixed maintenance costs. In other words, many costs to run the District have little relationship to the amount of water pumped. The District must ensure costs are covered and cannot rely on usage fees as a stable and predictable revenue source since usage can vary considerably, especially in the summer depending upon precipitation levels. Therefore, a mix of flat fees and usage fees are used to provide a stable revenue stream to meet costs. More detail about the District's cost structure and funding is provided in ["About the District"](#) link on the home page. [back to top](#)

## **WHY IS MY WATER DISCOLORED SOMETIMES?**

Discolored (red or tea colored) water is caused by naturally occurring minerals in well water that accumulate in system pipes over the years. Households may experience discolored water during times of hydrant flushing, district water line maintenance or other system pressure disturbances. If this happens, avoid doing laundry since the discolored water can stain linens. If staining does occur, avoid drying the clothing so the stain does not set in. Re-wash when the water is clear with a product called Iron Out, an iron stain removal powder found at most hardware stores. Running water can help speed up the return to clarity. Put this water to good use by watering plants or grass through a garden hose if possible. The discolored water poses no health risk to people or animals. [back to top](#)

## **HOW OFTEN IS THE WATER TESTED?**

East Valley complies with all State and Federal (EPA) Safe Drinking Water Act mandates and drinking water regulations. The water is tested monthly for a standard set of potential contaminants. More extensive annual testing is done and reported in the State required "Consumer Confidence Report," that explains important aspects of our water such as where it comes from and the level of contaminants as compared to allowable measurements. This report can be found on the home page under the ["Water Quality Section."](#) [back to top](#)

## **IS THERE FLUORIDE IN MY WATER?**

EV does not add fluoride to the water. Fluoride in our well water is naturally occurring. EV strictly follows the Colorado Primary Drinking Water Regulations and tests for fluoride which has routinely been around 1.4 parts per million (ppm). The maximum contaminant level allowed is 4 ppm. The American Dental Association recommended level in water is 0.7 to 1.2 ppm [back to top](#)

## **IS THERE LEAD IN MY WATER?**

A tiny trace amount (3 parts per billion) contained in EV water is within acceptable, non-harmful levels and comes mainly from natural deposits, however the majority of the trace amounts in EV water actually originate within the home itself. Homes that are either very old (pre-WWII with lead pipes) or homes built between 1982 and 1987 lead-based solder (later banned) are those at highest risk. To reduce lead in your water that is coming from house hold plumbing (1) Flush tap water for 30 seconds to 2 minutes before drinking. (2) Use only water from the cold water tap for drinking, cooking, and for making baby formula. Hot tap water dissolves lead faster and is likely to contain higher levels of lead if present. (3) When repairing or replacing plumbing, insist on lead free solder and lead free fixtures. For more on the subject of health and safety involving lead go to [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead)

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## **DO I NEED A WATER FILTER?**


Water provided by EV meets or exceeds all safe drinking water regulations. So in terms of safety as set forth by EPA regulations, the answer is no. However, given our supply is from wells, more dissolved minerals and sometimes trace amounts of sands are present. This results in "hard" water that can be more corrosive on appliances and fixtures. Hard water often requires the use of more soaps and detergents than soft water. Water filters can range from one of the highest and most expensive purification systems (Reverse Osmosis or "RO" which eliminates nearly all foreign substances) to more simple membrane filters to water softeners. All systems will have a positive impact on reducing hardness. RO systems are usually placed on a single faucet, like the kitchen sink where drinking water is drawn, due to cost and greatly reduced water flow. More basic fixture specific or whole house membrane systems can be fairly inexpensive to install and provide good sediment reduction. Higher levels of filtration can be obtained with more expensive/sophisticated filter cartridges. Water softeners or conditioners filter well, especially for hardness, but use a filter backwash process that typically uses salt and water (up to 50 gallons a cycle). This backwash will have an impact on water usage and on your septic system if you are not on the municipal sewer system. There is not a consensus about the impact of the salty brine that is discharged into septic system upon backwash. The key concerns are the buildup of salts in the soil with subsequent impact on pine trees and the corrosiveness of the salt on the septic tank and leach field piping. [🔼 back to top](#)

## SMALL WATER LEAKS IN MY HOUSE...ARE THEY A BIG DEAL?

YES in several ways. While a small drip may end up costing only a few dollars per month, the impact of leaked/wasted water when multiplied by all homes and businesses to our stressed water supplies in the semi-arid Colorado climate is significant. Larger leaks and multiple dripping fixtures can really add up by putting your usage into higher tier rates where dollar costs to you can become large. Even small amounts of daily leakage can have costly impacts on septic systems by overloading the fragile balance in these systems, especially for older septic systems.

Negative impacts on septic systems could include

sewer line back-ups resulting in water damage inside your home and premature failure of the septic system resulting in thousands of dollars in repair or replacement costs. Finally, small leaks in pipe connections can sometimes result in water seepage between walls and into basins resulting in cosmetic/structural damage and mold growth. [back to top](#)

Leak Size		Gallons Per Day	Gallons Per Month
	A dripping leak consumes:	15 gallons	450 gallons
•	A 1/32 in. leak consumes:	264 gallons	7,920 gallons
•	A 1/16 in. leak consumes:	943 gallons	28,300 gallons
•	A 1/8 in. leak consumes:	3,806 gallons	114,200 gallons
•	A 1/4 in. leak consumes:	15,226 gallons	456,800 gallons
•	A 1/2 in. leak consumes:	60,900 gallons	1,827,000 gallons

## HOW CAN I FIND WATER LEAKS IN MY HOUSE?

- a. EV has installed water meters that provide continuous radio frequency reporting. You can now install an app on your phone or view on your computer, your water usage by month, day and hour. More functionality is available at your on-line account than on the phone app. With this service, you will be able to see, for example, if water is being used during the night when or during the day when no one is home. You will be able to set up leak notification alerts. To set an account go to [www.eyeonwater.com](http://www.eyeonwater.com) or type in "eyeonwater" on your apple or android phone store to get the free app. Use our customer account number on upper right area of your water bill to set up your account. [More details on setting up an account.](#)
- b. Turn off all water using fixtures and appliances in your house. Find your water meter in the yard. Look at the clock dial for about a minute. If this dial moves forward during your observation, something in your house is probably leaking. Sometimes the dial will move forward and backwards slightly due to water system pressure fluctuations. Look for net forward movement. If the needle is moving, observe and time your meter for a slightly longer time period and calculate exactly how much water is being lost to get an idea of the severity of the leak. This method probably won't detect toilet leaks. See "b." below.
- c. Toilets are often a source of leaks that can be significant. An average of 20% of all toilets leak! Typically the rubber plunger or flapper valve in the toilet tank ages, becomes brittle and starts to leak. Hard water can speed up this process. The toilet will then run periodically to re-fill the tank. There are three easy ways to identify a toilet leak. NOTE: In some cases but usually not, the toilet leak may be the result of other factors like the plunger housing or a crack in the tank.
  - (1) If you hear your toilet running when it shouldn't be (e.g. not immediately after a flush), then there is a leak.
  - (2) Turn off the water supply valve at the base of the toilet. Look in the tank and mark the water level with a pencil. Keep the valve off and don't use the toilet for 6-8 hours. In the morning or after the shut-off period, look inside the tank – if the water level has dropped, then there is a leak.

Note: if the toilet water supply valve is heavily corroded, seized and/or won't turn easily, don't use this method. Forcing the valve may result in the valve to leak around its housing – a leak you may be unable to stop without turning off the entire house water supply! A toilet supply valve in bad shape should be replaced so that it can be turned off without problems in the event of a future tank crack or other toilet malfunction where water could leak onto the floor. Toilet supply line valves are notorious for falling into this condition after many years.
  - (3) Another way to see if your toilet is leaking is to put a non-staining dye into the tank when it is full. Do not use the toilet for 8-10 hours or overnight and see if any dye colored water has made its way into the toilet bowl. If the bowl water is colored, then you have a toilet plunger leak. Non-staining dye tablet are usually available at hardware stores. Food coloring can also work.

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### CAN I FIX A LEAKING TOILET MYSELF?

Yes in most cases. Replacement plungers generally cost between \$5 and \$15 and are available at all hardware stores. Remove the toilet tank lid, follow the instructions on the package. Most plungers simply require you disconnect the flushing mechanism chain, snap out the old plunger, snap in the new plunger and reconnect the flusher chain. Replacing plungers every few years is a good routine maintenance recommendation. Some newer low-water use toilets have different flushing systems that can be more complex to fix. [back to top](#)

### HOW MUCH WATER CAN AN EFFICIENT or LOW WATER USE TOILET SAVE?

Toilets can account for almost 30% of all indoor water use, more than any other fixture or appliance. Older toilets (installed prior to 1994) use 3.5 to 7 gallons of water per flush and as much as 20 gallons per person per day. Replacing an old toilet with a new model can save the typical household 7,900 to 21,700 gallons of water per year, cutting both your water and wastewater bills (if on the municipal sewer system). [back to top](#)

### HOW MUCH WATER DO PEOPLE USE INSIDE AND HOW?

While your individual usage by person varies, water use ranges from about 40 to 80 gallons per day (gpd). The following chart shows estimates of specific personal water use activities: [back to top](#)

### HOW MUCH WATER DO PEOPLE USE OUTSIDE (in the yard) AND HOW?

**Sprinklers:** The average sprinkler system for turf areas uses between 12 and 18 gallons per minute. Drip lines are usually much less, but not always! As you can see, this is a large variation. The best way to find out how much water your sprinkler system uses, and this use can vary widely by sprinkler zone, is to find your water meter and time the water used for a minute or two for each station. Then you can easily calculate your sprinkler system usage. This is often good information to have when setting your automatic system timer and avoid any “water bill shock” at the end of the month.

USE	Average / Person (gpd)
Bathing	15 - 25
Sink	3 - 5
Toilet	5 - 15
Washing Clothes	10 - 20
Washing Dishes	5 - 10
Cooking	1 - 2
Miscellaneous	1 - 3
Total	40 - 80

**Garden hose:** The output can vary depending upon the size of the hose. Some hoses are only ½” while others can be as large as ¾”. The best way to see how much water your garden hose supplies is to time how long it takes to fill a 5 gallon bucket, with the water fully on and no spray nozzles attached. Then calculate the gallons per minute from that base amount. Note that results will be skewed if you don’t have the water fully turned on or if you have some type of spray nozzle attached. Also, the output from your garden hose will go down from the test above when you attach a nozzle or lawn sprinkler to it. [back to top](#)

### HOW CAN I MONITOR MY WATER USAGE

EV has installed water meters that provide continuous radio frequency reporting. You can now install an app on your phone or view on your computer, your water usage by month, day and hour. More functionality is available at your on-line account than on the phone app. With this service, you will be able to see, for example, if water is being used during the night when or during the day when no one is home. You will be able to set up leak notification alerts. To set an account go to [www.eyeonwater.com](http://www.eyeonwater.com) or type in “eyeonwater” on your apple or android phone store to get the free app. Use our customer account number on upper right area of your water bill to set up your account. [More details on setting up an account.](#) [back to top](#)

### WHAT IS EV DOING ABOUT WATER CONSERVATION?

EV, like various other agencies, has been developing efforts to get water conservation information and education out to our customers, including children. In addition to public awareness and education, EV’s primary conservation tool is its tiered water rate structure, where the price per 1,000 gallons increases as usage thresholds are met, with the highest tier considered a punitive rate that is very high. In the past when severe drought conditions have existed, EV has enforced an irrigation schedule with violation fines. Such measures will be taken as needed depending upon drought conditions, water supplies and pumping capacities.

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### DOES EV OFFER REBATES OR INCENTIVES FOR WATER CONSERVATION?

YES, please see [“Incentive Programs”](#) on the home page for rebates on items like efficient washing machines and toilets. [back to top](#)

### HOW DO I CARE FOR MY SEPTIC SYSTEM?

Most homes in EV are on private septic systems. Proper care and regular pumping can make your system last for decades and save thousands of dollars in repair and replacement costs. Briefly, systems have a finite capacity in the short term and long term. Using excessive amounts of indoor water in a short period can overload a system, especially older systems, causing sewer backups. In the long term, heavily used systems



will have a shorter life span. In addition to use, the overall life span of a system can also depend upon the type/quality of installation, the long term care and type of soil. A Tri-County permit is required for septic replacement. The permit process, good information about how septic systems work and maintenance information is on the Tri-County web site under "Environmental Health" at [www.tchd.org](http://www.tchd.org) [back to top](#)

### **WHO PROVIDES SEWER SERVICE FOR HOMES WHO DON'T HAVE SEPTIC SYSTEMS?**

Homes within the EV located in the Valley County Club Estates and four homes at the most northern end of Algonquin Acres (north side of Caley Avenue) are connected to municipal sewer. EV contracts sewer service to the Arapahoe County Water and Waste Water Authority (ACWWA). Sewer charges are driven by ACWWA rates, and EV users pay an additional 25% "out of service area" charge as imposed by ACWWA. ACWWA has a property tax in addition to its service fees to fund the capital costs of its sewage treatment infrastructure. As EV residents don't pay the ACWWA property tax, the added 25% fee is in lieu of that tax. [back to top](#)

### **WILL THE SEPTIC SYSTEM HOMES EVER BE CONNECTED TO THE SEWER SYSTEM?**

This is highly unlikely. The costs to install the piping throughout Algonquin Acres when spread over the 72 septic system homes alone would be very costly, even when spread over a 30 year property tax bond for example. Additionally, ACWWA would require each home to pay a sewer tap connection fee. In 2015, ACWWA lists a single unit "water and sewer" combined tap fee of \$31,968 (a breakdown between water and sewer is not provided, but the sewer tap alone is likely to be around 50% of this amount). [back to top](#)

### **WHAT SHOULD I NOT PUT DOWN THE DRAIN AT HOME (applies to Sewer and Septic Homes)?**

**NO food grease:** Collect cooking oils, lard, meat fats, butter and dairy fats and throw them in the trash. These items will eventually clog your home lines causing potentially costly back-ups. They can also contribute to sewer system line clogs that can impact many homes and cost ACWWA for cleaning and repairs. It is a myth that hot water, soaps or the dishwasher will "dissolve" grease into a harmless state.

**NO pharmaceuticals:** There is growing concern about "emerging contaminants" in surface water and alluvial (shallow renewable) ground water supplies originating from pharmaceuticals both dumped down drains and from human/animal waste. If you have unused or outdated medicines, mix them with wet coffee grounds (a neutralizer and absorbent) in a secure non-leaking container/bag/jar and throw them in the trash. Landfills take precautionary steps to prevent waste from leaching into water supplies. Some pharmacies will take back unwanted pharmaceuticals for proper disposal.

**NO petroleum based products or chemicals not intended for household cleaning use.** This includes gasoline, diesel or other fuels, petroleum or silicone based lubricants or solvents or glycol type products like anti-freeze. These can do significant system and environmental damage.

**NO items like baby or disinfect wipes, diapers, cleaning pads, paper towels, napkins, dental floss.** These do NOT breakdown and will clog either your home's pipes or the sewer system pipes.

**NO paints.** Wash paint brushes out in a bucket and dump over turf areas or wash with the hose over turf areas. Paints can contain harmful chemicals and clog lines.

**NO RV waste disposal.** Use approved RV waste disposal services. This can overwhelm residential septic systems and sewer lines and result in backups into homes.

**Avoid all "gunky" things.** It is best to collect and throw away food preparation items like potato and similar peelings, coffee grounds and food waste in general, even if you have a garbage disposal. It is a myth that the garbage disposal grinds these items into a harmless mix. Over time, excessive garbage will accumulate and clog pipes. Such waste can also reduce the life of a septic system and require more frequent pumping.

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### **WHAT IS THE STORMWATER SYSTEM and SHOULD I CARE?**

Stormwater is rainwater, snowmelt, or even water from a garden hose or home car washing that runs off of a surface (like yards, driveways, parking lots, or rooftops). This water makes its way into a gutter, ditch or roadside drain and ultimately via surface or shallow groundwater pathways, into streams, lakes and reservoirs. Therefore, any waste products or household chemicals like paint, solvents, antifreeze and used motor oil should NEVER be disposed of into a stormwater system. Do not pour them onto a street or sidewalk thinking they will evaporate. Their residue remains and will eventually be washed into the storm drain or groundwater when it rains. Avoid sweeping dirt, grass clippings, leaves or other yard waste into streets where water flow is likely to take this material into a storm drain. Such material can clog the system and introduce lawn chemicals. Inevitably, some lawn irrigation water where chemicals can be present will run-off and onto the street. For this reason, fix broken, misaimed or obstructed sprinkler heads. Do not over-water or use long cycles where runoff is enhanced. Use minimal amounts of lawn fertilizers and chemicals. Remember, nitrogen is a key active ingredient in all fertilizers, but it is also a key promoter of unwanted algae that starves off oxygen in rivers and lakes. So even "organic" and "natural" fertilizers should not be overused. [back to top](#)

**DOES EV PICK UP THE TRASH?**

EV does coordinate a community weekly trash collection service through a private trash hauler for the residents of Algonquin Acres. Residents in the Valley Country Club Estates are obligated to a similar community contract through their home owners association. For EV residents, a monthly trash charge appears on the water bill. The EV service rate is up to 50% less than if each homeowner individually arranged for trash services and thus the reason a community contract was arranged. A community collection contract also eliminates multiple trash haulers coming into the neighborhood, likely on different days. See the EV home page for more on trash collection. NOTE: Our US Mail carrier has requested that trash/recycle bins not be placed in front of mail boxes, this impedes their ability to quickly drive up to the mail box for efficient delivery. [🔙 back to top](#)

**DOES TRASH PICK-UP INCLUDE RECYCLE?**

YES. Recycle is picked up every other week. See the EV home page for the schedule. Recycle must be put in marked recycle containers of any type. Markings for recycle include a yellow or purple lid and/or stickers/logos on the container saying "recycle" or having a recycle symbol. It is recommended that trash be set on one side of the drive way and recycle be set on the other. [🔙 back to top](#)