

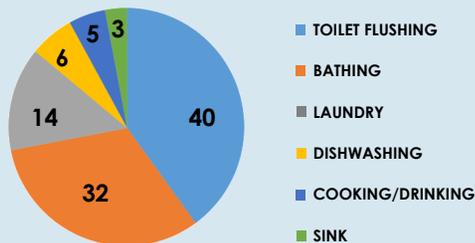
# Water Facts

Water is an essential element to sustain life. You can only last 20-30 days without food, 10 minutes without air, and 5-7 days without water. Here are some facts for understanding the value of water.



- Less than 1% of all water on earth is fresh water available for human consumption.
- Water comprises about 60% of the average adult male body, and 55% in adult females.
- A pair of jeans takes 2,900 gallons of water to produce as cotton is a very water-intensive crop.
- According to the World Health Organization, 80% of worldwide illnesses are related to contaminated water.
- About three-quarters of all fresh water in Alaska is stored as glacial ice.
- Alaska has more than 3 million lakes, 12,000 rivers, and 100,000 glaciers.
- The average daily consumptive water use in Alaska is 27 million gallons.
- Most Anchorage customers pay a flat rate of \$50.98 a month for water and \$41.54 for wastewater services.
- In Alaska, urban runoff is the most common source of pollution in our surface waters.

Average U.S. Household Water Usage Breakdown, Percentages



# Helpful Links

## EPA Ground Water and Drinking Water

*EPA's portal for all information on drinking water*  
<http://water.epa.gov/drink/>

## What To Do After the Flood

*How to care for your well after it's been flooded*  
<http://water.epa.gov/drink/info/well/whatdo.cfm>

## Camping, Hiking, Travel

*Be a cautious traveler and learn how to safely use water*  
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/drinking/travel/>

## Well Owner

*Free access to water well educational and resource materials*  
<http://www.wellowner.org>

## DEC Publications

*A variety of materials published by DEC*  
<http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/dw/publications/publications.html>



# Your Local Water Utility

## Anchorage—Municipal Water & Wastewater

564-2700 (main); 564-2762 (after-hours emergency)

## Fairbanks—Utility Services of Alaska

479-3118

## Juneau—Water Utility

780-6888 (main); 586-2165 (after-hours emergency)

## Kenai—Water & Sewer

283-7535

## MatSu Borough—Public Works

745-9812

## Nome—Nome Joint Utility System

443-6587(main); 443-6321 (after-hours emergency)

## North Slope Borough—Water & Sewer

852-0489

## Soldotna—Utility Department

262-4205

# The Value of Water

Facts and tips on protecting, conserving, and responsibly using drinking water at home.



## Environmental Conservation Drinking Water Program

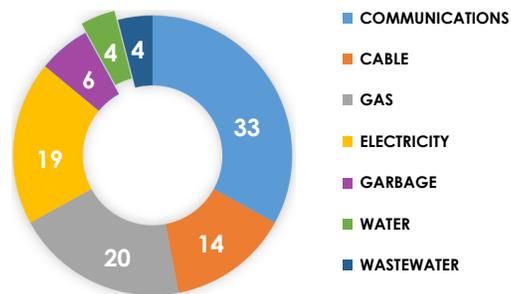
555 Cordova Street  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

- ☎ 907-269-7656
- ☎ 866-965-7656 (toll-free)
- 🌐 [dec.alaska.gov/eh/dw/](http://dec.alaska.gov/eh/dw/)



# Responsible Water Use

While tap water is a cheap utility (compared to gas or electricity), we still need to conserve and take care of this finite resource. As our world's population grows, so does our need to access clean drinking water.



Average U.S. Household Monthly Utility Costs, Percentages

## Save Water and Money

These tips can reduce your water usage and also save you money by reducing your maintenance costs and implementing preventative techniques to ensure the longevity of your water pipes and devices. Repair leaks right away. Install low-flow shower heads. Add a float booster to your toilets to reduce the amount of water per flush. Turn off the water when you brush your teeth. Store tap water in the refrigerator, so it's served cold. Winterize your home, so you don't risk having a pipe freeze and burst. Run your dishwasher and clothes washer only when there are full loads. Rinse fruits and veggies in a pan of water.

## Bottled Water versus Tap Water

In one year, the average American goes through 167 disposable plastic water bottles. A 20 ounce bottle can cost up to \$3.50. That's close to \$31 a gallon compared to about \$2 for 1,000 gallons of tap water.

If you don't enjoy the taste of your tap water, try a pitcher filter. One filter can effectively replace 300 plastic bottles' worth of water, which saves a lot of money. Most bottled water companies simply bottle municipal water and sell it at a price hundreds of times more than what you pay at home for the same!



## Water & Wintertime

Properly winterizing your home can save you time, money, and the headache of dealing with water-related damage. Since you live in a cold-weather climate, here are some important things you can do.

- Protect your pipes. Wrapping pipes in insulated materials, such as foam rubber, is an inexpensive way to defend them from the cold. Another way is to install UL-approved heat tape or cable on exterior pipes or pipes in unheated areas.
- Know the location of your master shutoff valve. If a pipe freezes or another emergency occurs, you may need to shut off the water to your house to prevent a pipe from bursting.
- Drain water supply sprinkler lines and outdoor hoses so accumulated water doesn't freeze.
- If temperatures get very, very cold, leave a faucet on a slow drip. Even just a trickle will help keep pipes from freezing.
- Open kitchen and bathroom cabinet doors to let warm air circulate.
- Seal off access doors, air vents, and cracks to prevent cold air from chilling pipes.
- If you leave for extended periods of time, leave your home's heat on at 55°F or higher.

# Water Emergencies

## Boil Water Notice (BWN)

If you're on a public water system, it may issue a BWN if an event threatens public health, such as elevated coliform bacteria in a routine water sample. If a BWN is issued in your community, boil all water for drinking, cooking, and teeth brushing for at least 2 minutes. Let the water cool before using, and store in sanitized containers.

## Emergency Disinfection

If you need to purify water, whether you're in the wild camping or collecting water from your tap, chlorine bleach can help sanitize your water when conventional treatment is unavailable. While it does not guarantee 100% removal of harmful micro-organisms, disinfecting your water will reduce your chances of getting sick. For every 5 gallons of water, thoroughly mix 1/4 teaspoon of unscented chlorine bleach and let it sit for at least 30 minutes. If it's cloudy, let it sit a little longer.

## Flooded Well

You can chlorinate your well in the event that it has been contaminated by flood waters or any other potential contaminant, but make sure to do follow-up testing to ensure the water is safe.

*For more detailed information, please see Helpful Links on the back page of this pamphlet.*

