

Spring 2016 News

# Emergency Preparedness

Clackamas Fire District #1 recently conducted a Barriers to Preparedness survey to better understand how prepared our communities are for an emergency. 67% of respondent said they and their immediate family are somewhat prepared, 19% are very prepared, and 14% not prepared at all. When asked what keeps you from starting or improving your disaster plan/kit? The top 2 reasons were: cost (35%) and time (38%). So are you water prepared?

As prepared as we are, some emergencies are potentially bigger than us – especially natural disasters. If an earthquake, winter storm, or other disaster strikes, you may not have access to food and water for days or even weeks. Take time now to prepare for you and your family. The most important thing you can do to prepare for an emergency is to plan ahead and have essential emergency supplies on hand.

Having an ample supply of WATER is a top priority in an emergency. You can live for weeks without food, but without water, you can die in as little as 3 days. Help your water provider, emergency responders and other relief

organizations help you by having an adequate emergency supply of water, food and other essentials.

You will need to store at least one gallon of water per person per day. According to the Red Cross and FEMA, you should store at least a two week supply of water for each member of your family. A minimum three-day supply is essential. Don't forget to store additional supplies for your pets.

In an emergency, drink at least 2 quarts of water a day, 3 to 4 quarts a day if you are in a hot climate, pregnant, sick, or a child. If supplies run low, don't ration water: Drink the amount you need today and look for more tomorrow.

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# How and Where to Store Water



In a cool, dark place in your home, each vehicle, and your workplace. Preferably in store-bought, factory-sealed water containers. Alternately, in food-grade-quality containers made for storing water and available from sporting goods and surplus stores and other retailers. These containers must be thoroughly washed, sanitized, and rinsed.

It is important to stay informed before, during, and after an emergency. Sign-up to get public alerts at [www.publicalerts.org/signup](http://www.publicalerts.org/signup) is a website that provides news and information on major service disruptions in the Portland-Vancouver metro area. PublicAlerts.org's sign-up page includes links to county-specific emergency notification systems throughout Oregon and SW Washington. For more resources and information on how to prepare go to [www.clackamasproviders.org/emergency-preparedness/](http://www.clackamasproviders.org/emergency-preparedness/)

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# How Water Systems Work

## Drinking Water Treatment

Public Drinking Water Treatment is one of the first steps in ensuring that you receive safe water from your tap. We have five drinking water treatment plants on the Clackamas River where water is taken out of the river and treated before it is used as drinking water.

Water treatment is the process of removing undesirable chemicals, biological contaminants, suspended solids and gases from the raw river water. The goal is to produce water fit for human consumption.

At these treatment plants, water is treated to meet legal limits set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on the levels of certain contaminants in drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA).

These legal limits reflect both the level that protects human health and the level that water systems can achieve using the best available technology. Want to learn more? Call us at **(503) 723-3511** to schedule a tour at your treatment plant, and see first-hand how your drinking water is made.



## Spring Irrigation System Tune-Up

Spring is the time to tune-up your lawn and garden irrigation system for peak summer performance - it's one of the most important things you can do to keep your system operating efficiently.

Because automatic irrigation systems often come on in the early morning hours - unobserved by their owners - leaks and other problems can go unnoticed for long periods of time - wasting water and damaging plants. By taking the time to check, repair, and adjust the sprinklers at the beginning of the watering season - *and making periodic checks throughout the summer* - you can be sure your lawn and gardens are being watered properly, without wasting water.

### Spring Checklist:

- 1. Close all manual drains** - the irrigation system was probably drained last fall - make sure that none of the manual drain valves have been left open.
- 2. Slowly open the main valve** and allow the mainline piping from the main valve to the backflow prevention assembly to fill with water.
- 3. Have the backflow prevention assembly tested** by a state certified tester - many local water providers can supply a list of testers. [Atmospheric Vacuum Breaker's (AVB's) do not require a test]. Contact your local water provider for requirements.

**4. Pressurize the mainline** from the backflow prevention assembly to the control valves - have one of the control valves open while you do this so that air trapped in the piping can escape through the sprinkler heads as the pipes fill with water.

**5. Run the entire sprinkler system**, one zone at a time. As you do this, check for the following: Signs of leakage, caused by damage to the heads or piping during the winter months. Repair as needed. Spray Pattern of the sprinklers can be inefficient. Sometimes the spray nozzles get clogged and need to be cleaned. Also, spray nozzles and sprinkler heads may need adjustments to reduce overspray onto walks, driveways, etc. Interference of the spray pattern can occur if plants have been moved, play equipment has been installed, or if plants have just grown too tall. Adjusting the sprinklers to accommodate the changing landscape will eliminate dry spots and puddling caused by blocked spray. Overgrown grass can impede sprinkler heads - make sure to keep grass trimmed. Also, check for leaning sprinkler heads.

By following these simple guidelines, you can have a healthy lawn and garden all summer - while conserving water!

## Spring Quiz:

- 1. In case of an emergency, how much water should we have on hand per person?**
  - A. < 1 gallon a day/2 week supply
  - B. < 1 quart per day/1 week supply
  - C. < 1 gallon per day/1 week supply
  - D. < 1 quart per day/2 week supply
- 2. What Agency sets the legal limits for drinking water treatment?**
  - A. Oregon Drinking Water Program
  - B. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
  - C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
  - D. Your Water Provider
- 3. What time of year is the best time to give your irrigation system a tune-up?**
  - A. In the Fall
  - B. In the Spring
  - C. In the Winter
  - D. In the Summer
- 4. In our area, on average how many gallons of water does each person use each day?**
  - A. 100 gallons of water
  - B. 50 gallons of water
  - C. 75 gallons of water
  - D. 200 gallons of water

Answers - Can be found on page 4.

# Faces of Drinking Water

An Interview with  
Gail Johnson

Delivering safe reliable drinking water to our customers is our number one priority. Many different people from many different walks of life work hard every day to ensure the delivery of reliable drinking water to our homes, schools and business. Recently we sat down with Gail Johnson, the Water Quality Coordinator for the City of Oregon City, and spoke with her about what working in the water industry means to her.

**How long have you been working in the water division of Oregon City Public works?** On April 15, 2016 it will be 18 years.

**What is your background prior to working in drinking water?** I was a maintenance worker for the National Park Service for many years, working in the western US. While there, I obtained a level 1 Water Distribution/Operators certification. Later, in 1995, I received a flyer advertising recertification trainings for public water workers. Because of the water quality sampling I had done in the past for the park service I was interested, so I called the phone number on the flyer. That individual put me in touch with Dan Lundy at Clackamas Community College. He encouraged me to look into the Water Quality Technology program there. This was what I was looking for. I completed the program in December 1997, in less time than the two year associate degree takes, because I was able to transfer some credits from my BS degree in Anthropology (from Montana State University).

When I started working for the City of Oregon City my position was the Water Quality Technician. I was the first person hired specifically for that position. I was in charge of taking all the required and routine samples for the City. I also performed other duties such as managing the cross connection program, pump station maintenance, and flushing. In 2008 the City hired an Environmental Services Technician to



conduct field work and I became the Water Quality Coordinator. We are responsible for keeping the city in compliance with both drinking water requirements and stormwater tasks related to our NPDES MS4 permit.

**What is your favorite/ least favorite part of your job?** I really enjoy the diversity of working in public water. However, diversity can be a double edged sword, it's great because you never get bored, but it also means juggling a lot of projects at one time. I have enjoyed the new stormwater duties; it's always nice to learn something new.

**Do you plan on retiring with the City of Oregon City Public Works?** I plan to stay with the City until sometime in 2018. At that time I will have worked for the City for 20 years. After that I'm going to do nothing for a bit and just relax, then perhaps I'll find something else; I'm keeping my options open.

**What accomplishments are you most proud of in your career?** I've worked hard on improving and expanding Oregon City's Water Quality Program. The installation of designated water quality sample stations was a big deal, they have really helped. In 1998 we were required to take 25 routine bacteriological samples each month; now we take 40 each month. In regards to the stormwater program, I have figured out how to combine some of the inspection and public education requirements with other duties we have, in order to be as efficient with our time as possible.

**What advice would you give to someone starting out in this field?** Be open to any

options presented to you and show some initiative. People who show initiative are always appreciated.

**How has the industry changed since you started?** Technology has really brought us forward and made our jobs much easier. Take SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition) for instance. Before SCADA, we would have to drive to a reservoir, climb it and open the hatch to see what the water level was. Now we can check things from the computer. It saves a lot of time.

**What would you like the public to know about their drinking water?** In light of the recent lead situation in public drinking water, I would like to tell our customers that they really do not have to worry about the quality of the water they drink. Most public water systems are doing everything they are required to do to keep the water safe.

**What can the public do to help make your job easier?** As the City's Cross Connection and Backflow Prevention Program coordinator, please have your backflow assemblies tested annually. Chasing down those who don't comply is not a very efficient use of rate-payer dollars.

**What do you feel is most important about your job?** Public health and safety, that's our mantra!

**What's the one thing you can't live without at work?** Water!!!! And a computer, nearly everything we do involves a computer.

**What would you say H2O is to you?** Well, I am a Pisces, enough said.

**What do you do for fun when you're not working?** I enjoy puttering around in my yard, hiking/walking, and reading.

We at the CRWP would like to thank Gail for taking time out of her busy schedule to let us interview her,

Thanks, Gail!

## Don't Let Your Toilet Run



We use water to cook, take showers, clean and drink. In the Clackamas River Water Providers service area, the average person uses 75 gallons of water each day, and a family of four typically consumes around 320 gallons per day. That is a lot of water.

Inside our homes our toilets account for about a quarter of all the water you use. This means that those toilet leaks can waste lots of water and cause higher water bills. A silent toilet leak can waste more than 50 gallons of water a day.

To test your toilet for leaks, remove the lid of the toilet tank. Drop one leak detecting dye tablet (or two drops of food coloring) into the tank and wait 15 minutes. If color appears in the toilet bowl, then you have a leak. One of the most common culprits of leaks is the flapper or flush valve. If you can't easily fix the leak yourself, call a plumber.

For more information on how to fix a leaky toilet go to [www.clackamasproviders.org/fixing-a-leaky-toilet/](http://www.clackamasproviders.org/fixing-a-leaky-toilet/)

### Free Conservation Tools!

We want to help you save water. The CRWP has a number of FREE conservation devices to help you save water inside your home. They include:

- Indoor Home Water Audit Kits
- Leak Detection Dye Tablets
- Toilet Displacement Bag
- 1.5 gpm Bathroom Faucet Aerator
- 1.5 gpm Kitchen Faucet Aerator
- 1.5 gpm Bathroom Shower Head
- 5-minute Shower Timer

To request any of the devices listed above please order on line at [christine@clackamasproviders.org](mailto:christine@clackamasproviders.org) or call **503-723-3511**.

### Conservation Tips

- Run only full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher. (Saves 75-200 gallons per week).
- Keep a bottle of cold water in the refrigerator for drinking instead of running the faucet. (Saves 200-300 gallons per month).
- Wash dishes with the least amount of detergent possible minimizing rinsing. (Saves 50-150 gallons per month).
- If you don't want water in a restaurant, don't take it, you will save the water in the glass and the water used to wash

the glass. (Collectively saves millions of gallons per year).

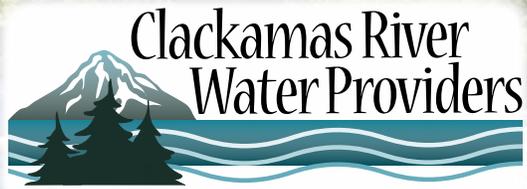
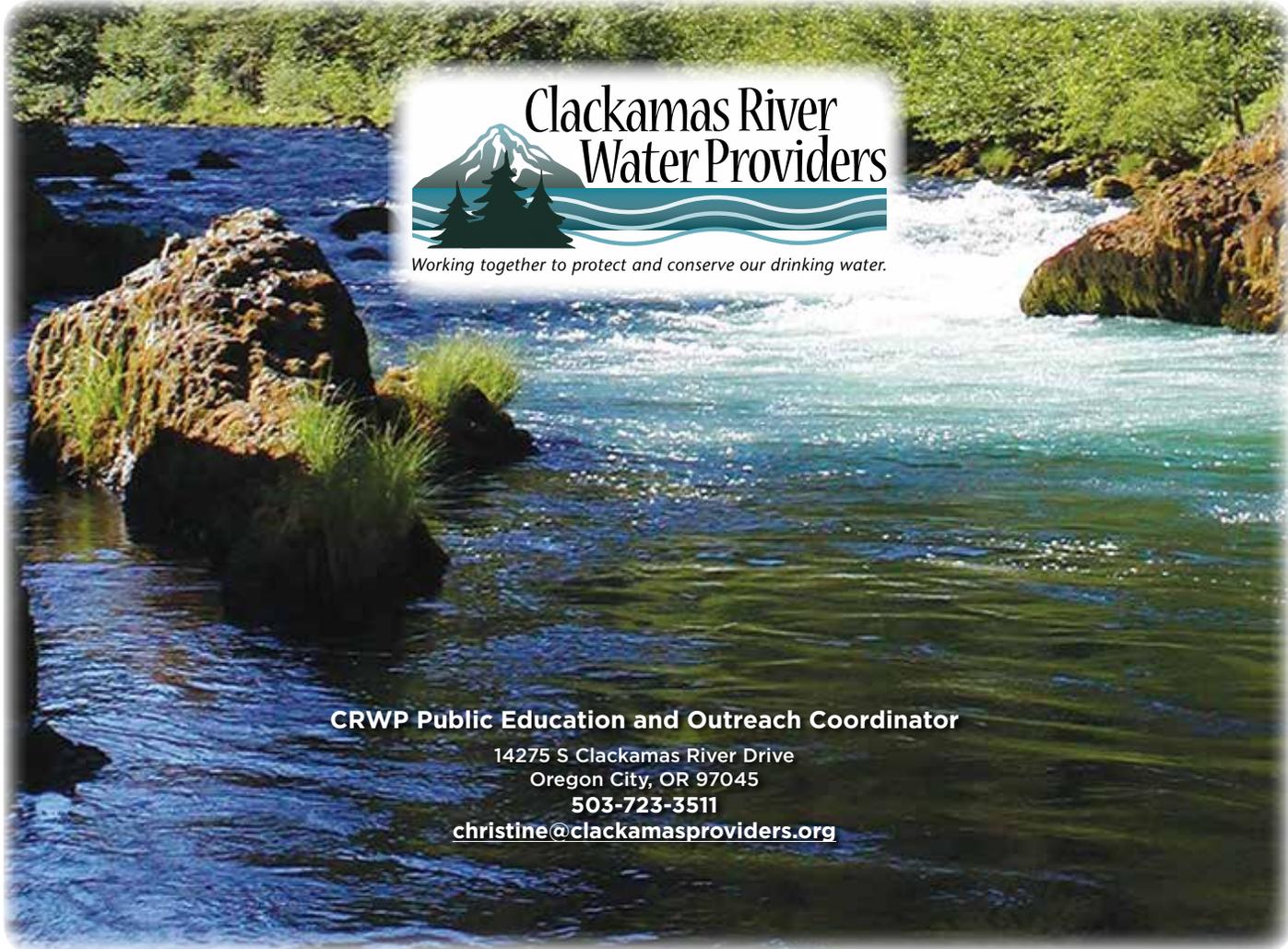
- Rinse vegetables in a filled sink instead of running water. (Saves 150-25- gallons per month).

## Spring Quiz:

### Answers

**Question 1** - Answer is A  
**Question 2** - Answer is B

**Question 3** - Answer is B  
**Question 4** - Answer is C



Working together to protect and conserve our drinking water.

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### Our Members:



[www.cwater.com](http://www.cwater.com)



[www.cityofestacada.org](http://www.cityofestacada.org)



[www.ci.gladstone.or.us](http://www.ci.gladstone.or.us)



[www.ci.oswego.or.us](http://www.ci.oswego.or.us)



[www.oaklodgewater.org](http://www.oaklodgewater.org)



[www.sfwb.org](http://www.sfwb.org)



[www.sunrisewater.com](http://www.sunrisewater.com)



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