

1 DRINKING WATER SYSTEM

BRINGS SAFE, CLEAN WATER TO OUR HOMES



HOW IT WORKS

Hampton Roads' raw water sources include aquifers, reservoirs, lakes and rivers. Most of our drinking water comes from surface water which is pumped to water treatment plants. During the treatment process, the water passes through screens, then chemicals are added to remove impurities. Next, the clarified water is disinfected to kill bacteria, viruses and other microorganisms, then filtered to remove any remaining particles. Finally, a secondary disinfectant is added to maintain disinfection throughout the pipe system. Once the water is cleaned and safe to drink, it is pumped through a network of pipes and storage facilities to homes and businesses.

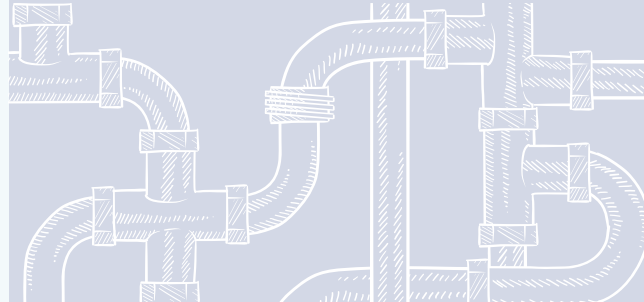
2 STORMWATER SYSTEM

TAKES RAIN WATER AWAY FROM HOMES AND STREETS THROUGH THE STORMWATER OPENINGS YOU SEE ON YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD CURB OR THE GRATES ON PUBLIC STREETS



HOW IT WORKS

Rainwater runoff from rooftops, gutters and lawns is directed into the stormwater system. The drain usually looks like a small opening in the curb or a grate in the pavement. Unlike the sanitary sewer system, stormwater is never treated and flows directly to our local waterways.



3 SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

TAKES WATER AWAY FROM OUR HOMES WHEN WE FLUSH THE COMMODE, TAKE A SHOWER OR OTHERWISE RUN WATER DOWN OUR DRAINS. THIS WATER IS KNOWN AS WASTEWATER



HOW IT WORKS

Wastewater leaving our homes travels through miles and miles of pipes to nine treatment plants across the region. Because of the flat landscape, sewer pumping stations are used to push the wastewater to the treatment plants. At the treatment facility, debris is screened and settled out of the wastewater. Bacteria and other small organisms then consume the waste and help clean the water. Finally, it is disinfected before being released back into local waterways. Some treatment plants add an extra step to remove nutrients to help protect local waterways.



OUR AGING INFRASTRUCTURE

Driving along the region's roadways, it is easy to see the wear and tear that time and the elements place on our highway infrastructure. But underneath those same roads lie thousands of miles of pipeline that make up our drinking water, sanitary sewer and stormwater systems. Our community is literally built on top of this vast infrastructure. These systems, and the people who maintain them, work silently and reliably

to keep the water flowing. In fact, the systems work so well, we often take them for granted. Because this infrastructure is out of sight, we are less likely to appreciate the need for maintenance. But just like our road systems, their proper functioning is essential to ensuring a high quality of life here in Hampton Roads.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office has noted that water and wastewater utilities do not generate enough revenue from user rates to cover their full service cost. The result of this shortfall

is postponed maintenance and delayed replacement of our infrastructure. This is a reality in Hampton Roads and without action now, we risk increased service disruptions, water main breaks and sanitary sewer overflows. Beyond these inconveniences, deteriorating infrastructure poses a threat to the environment, our local economy and public health.

GOOD TO DO

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

DON'T TAKE WATER FOR GRANTED.

Water is life. The water we use now is all we'll ever have, so we must use it wisely. You can conserve in small ways that make a big difference to preserve and protect our water resources.

SUPPORT AND INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE.

It is critical that we support the investment necessary to replace our aging infrastructure. Our quality of life and health cannot be sustained without continued and improved access to clean drinking water and sanitation services.

THINK BEFORE YOU FLUSH.

It's a toilet, not a trash can! Everything you send down the drain ends up at your local wastewater treatment plant.

STAY INFORMED ABOUT WATER-RELATED ISSUES.

Learn more about what happens to the water you drink and use. Start by reading and understanding your water and wastewater bill and your locality's annual water quality report.