



Customer's Handbook

Your Water Services Guide



Hilton Head PSD
24-Hour Customer Service
(843) 681-5525

About This Handbook

Welcome to the Hilton Head Public Service District Customer's Handbook. Hilton Head PSD is focused on customer service and this publication reflects our commitment to providing our customers with useful information about their drinking water and public sewer service.

It is important to remember that this Customer's Handbook contains current information as of its date of publication. We make revisions to the Handbook at reasonable intervals as information changes.

We'd love to hear your thoughts on how to improve our Customer's Handbook. Simply drop us a line at info@hhpsd.com or call our Customer Service Center at (843) 681-5525.

April 2007

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Hilton Head Public Service District



Hilton Head PSD is located at 21 Oak Park Drive, off Mathews Drive. This aerial photograph shows the PSD with Port Royal Plaza in the upper left corner.

Hilton Head Public Service District (PSD) is the drinking water and reclaimed water utility for the north- and mid-island areas of Hilton Head Island. It is our pleasure to serve you. The PSD is customer-owned and customer-focused. We are *The Customer's Water Utility*. Our continuing pledge is to provide you with a top-quality drinking water supply that protects public health and a state-of-the-art reclaimed water system that protects our delicate island environment.

This PSD Customer's Handbook is your guide to your drinking water and reclaimed water utility. Please consult it when you have questions about your water and sewer service.

Contact Us

There are a variety of ways to contact us:

In Person: Our Customer Service Center is located at 21 Oak Park Drive, off Mathews Drive. Office hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Customers can pay bills, set up new service, and receive other customer service. The Customer Service center also features a drop box service for bill payment. Please drop by and visit our friendly and efficient Customer Service Team.

Drive-Thru Window: Customers can use our Drive-Thru Window at our Customer Service Center from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday to pay bills and receive other customer service.

Telephone: Our Customer Service Center can be reached 24 hours a day at (843) 681-5525. A PSD field service technician is on call 24 hours a day to assist with service calls at your home or business. Customers can pay bills using their MasterCard or Visa by calling Customer Service between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The PSD's fax line is (843) 681-5052.

Internet: Our website, www.hhpsd.com, contains a wealth of information about the PSD and its services. Customers can view the PSD's rates and fees, the annual Consumer Confidence Report on water quality, water hardness levels, and much more. Questions and service requests can be emailed to the PSD at info@hhpsd.com. Additionally, our elected Hilton Head PSD Commission receives emails at commissioners@hhpsd.com. The Commission welcomes public input and would love to hear from you.

Mail: The PSD's mailing address is:

Hilton Head Public Service District
P.O. Box 21264
Hilton Head Island, SC 29925

Our physical address is:

Hilton Head Public Service District
21 Oak Park Drive
Hilton Head Island, SC 29926

Customer Service

The PSD's staff is available to assist you with an array of customer service. Simply call our Customer Service Center at (843) 681-5525 or email us at info@hhpsd.com for assistance with any of the following:

- **Leak checks.** Does your water bill seem inconsistent with your usage? You may have a leak on your property. PSD staff will come to your home or business to check for any possible leaks occurring outside the structure. We also will make emergency repairs if necessary.
- **Low-Pressure checks.** Are you experiencing low water pressure? PSD staff can assess the possible causes and provide information on available remedies.



The PSD Customer Service Center at 21 Oak Park Drive is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

- New service and address changes. Our Customer Service Center can assist you with establishing a new account or changing your billing address. Simply contact us at (843) 681-5525.

Bill Payment Options

Depending upon where you live or work in the PSD service area, you are billed either monthly or quarterly for your water and sewer service. PSD bills are sent via mail. Customers can pay their PSD bill using a variety of methods:

- Check by mail.
- By telephone using MasterCard or Visa.
- Online using MasterCard or Visa at www.hhpsd.com.
- By automatic bank draft.
- In person at our Customer Service Center.
- Drive-Thru Window at our Customer Service Center.
- 24-hour Drop Box at our Customer Service Center.

The PSD Community Room

The Hilton Head PSD Community Room is located at our Customer Service Center at 21 Oak Park Drive, off Mathews Drive. The Community

Room is available free of charge to groups in need of meeting space. In fact, our Community Room is one of the few free meeting spaces available to the public on Hilton Head Island. The room can accommodate groups of up to 100. It is fully equipped with a kitchenette, projection screen, chairs, easels, folding tables, and restrooms. The PSD Community Room is the home of Clemson Extension Service community education programs on Hilton Head Island, and is used by a variety of established groups. To reserve the Community Room, please contact our Customer Service Center at (843) 681-5525, or download a reservation form online at www.hhpsd.com and fax it back to us at (843) 681-5052.



Clemson Extension Service conducts a customer education program in the PSD Community Room.

Commercial Service

Hilton Head PSD's service area includes scores of restaurants and other businesses that are required under state law to have commercial grease traps to reduce the introduction of fats, oils and greases into the public wastewater system. The PSD performs scheduled inspections of the grease traps. PSD staff also educates commercial customers about the reduction of fats, oils and greases and the proper maintenance of their grease traps. Please contact our Customer Service Center at (843) 681-5525 if you have any questions about the grease trap program.

PSD Quick Facts

- Serves more than 17,000 customers.
- Provides our customers with an average of 6 million gallons of

- drinking water per day.
- Has the ability to provide 2.8 billion gallons of drinking water per year.
- Uses five elevated water storage tanks and three ground-level tanks with a collective capacity of 8.4 million gallons.
- Maintains more than 220 miles of drinking water lines throughout our service area.
- Maintains more than 200 miles of sewer mains throughout our service area.
- Operates a Reclaimed Water Plant with a capacity to treat 6.4 million gallons of wastewater per day.
- Maintains more than 110 sewer lift stations located throughout our service area.
- Uses three storage lagoons capable of holding up to 30 million gallons of Reclaimed Water.
- Provides Reclaimed Water to 11 golf courses for use in irrigation.
- Provides Reclaimed Water to wetlands in Hilton Head Plantation and Palmetto Hall as part of a state-monitored wetlands nourishment program.

History

Citizens of Hilton Head Island relied on private wells for their drinking water needs until 1957. At that time, a local development firm by the name of the Hilton Head Water Company introduced a community waterworks system, installing water lines and drilling wells throughout the island.

As the community expanded and development progressed, Hilton Head citizens became increasingly aware of the need for enhanced services, a need especially apparent in fire protection, water flow and sewer services.

The Hilton Head Public Service District (PSD) is a special purpose district created by the South Carolina General Assembly in 1969 to provide water and sewer services to Hilton Head Island.

Eleven separate utilities, both public and private, provided water and wastewater services to the residents of the island at the time of the District's creation. Beginning in 1995, the District acquired the four utilities that now encompass its current service district, including Hilton Head Plantation Utilities, Hilton Head Island Rural Community Water District, Coastal Utilities and Hilton Head Utilities. In addition, the District acquired two small systems on the island previously served by the Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority. Consolidation of the remaining island utilities formed the three public service districts currently serving Hilton Head Island.

Today, Hilton Head PSD serves more than 17,000 customers in the north- and mid-island areas of Hilton Head Island, from Windmill Harbour to the Hilton Head Resort.

The remainder of Hilton Head Island is served by either the Broad Creek PSD, which serves the Palmetto Dunes and Shelter Cove areas, or the South Island PSD, which serves all areas of the island south of Palmetto Dunes. The three island PSDs work together on an array of issues, from hurricane operations and recovery to future water supply planning.

The PSD Commission

Hilton Head PSD is governed by a seven-member Board of Commissioners. The commissioners are elected by our customers, from four separate districts within the PSD.

The Commission's duties include setting the policies and long-term goals of the PSD, and approving the annual operating budget and PSD property tax rate. The Commission also selects and employs the PSD's general manager.

Commissioners serve four-year terms, and elections are held during even-numbered years.

The Commission's normal meeting schedule is the fourth Tuesday of each month. Meetings are held in the PSD Community Room, at our Customer Service Center at 21 Oak Park Drive, off Mathews Drive. The public is welcome and customer input is invited. Customers can contact the Commission via email at commissioners@hhpsd.com.

The Hilton Head PSD Commission has adopted the following Mission and Vision statements and associated Goals:

VISION STATEMENT

To be a state-of-the-art public utility, operated by an excellent, highly trained staff, providing the best possible levels of customer service and satisfaction.

MISSION STATEMENT

Hilton Head Public Service District is a public utility created by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina and enabled by the laws of the State of South Carolina to protect the environment, quality of life, and public health. Its mission is to make available high quality water and sewer service, as well as to deliver those services to all developed

properties within the District at a reasonable cost, in a timely manner, and with a sound community and environmental conscience.

GOALS

- Provide superb customer service through a diverse, well-trained, motivated staff using state-of-the-art technology.
- Continue to expand our sewer collection system and achieve 100 percent connection so that all customers, the community, and the environment receive the benefit of comprehensive sewer service.
- Establish a sustainable, economical and balanced supply of long-term water resources to sustain the quality of life on the island.
- Develop and apply a master strategic plan to guide all aspects of the district's infrastructure needs, growth, development, operations and financial management.
- Review and, as necessary, revise the structure and functions of the Board of Commissioners and its committees to optimize the accomplishment of these goals.
- Expand the District's alliances with other public service districts, with Beaufort County, and with the Town of Hilton Head Island to better coordinate activities, encourage interconnections, share resources, provide mutual support and reduce costs.

PSD Organization

The PSD is organized into three departments. The outline below details each department's responsibilities.

Customer Service:

- Customer Service



The PSD's Operations department uses its vacuum truck during repair projects.

- Billing
- Meter Reading
- Purchasing
- Warehouse

Operations:

- Drinking Water
- Reclaimed Water Plant
- Wastewater Collection
- Water Quality Laboratory
- Construction

Administration:

- Budgeting
- Engineering
- Community Relations
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Geographic Information Systems



The PSD's Seabrook Water Tower is located in Hilton Head Plantation.

Where Does the Drinking Water Come From?

The PSD supplies our customers with “blended” water. That means that about 50 percent of our water comes from the island’s own groundwater. We pump groundwater from the Upper Floridan Aquifer, using underground wells. The remaining 50 percent of our water supply is purchased wholesale by the PSD from the Beaufort-Jasper Water & Sewer Authority (BJWSA), which supplies treated surface water from the Savannah River. The groundwater and surface water supplies are “blended” in the PSD’s water distribution system.

The Upper Floridan Aquifer is an underground geological formation located 75 to 200 feet below the surface of the earth. The Upper Floridan Aquifer is one of the largest aquifers in the world, and stretches from the Beaufort area southward through the Florida Everglades. To protect our

customers from contamination events, the PSD utilizes automatic feeders that supply precise amounts of chloramines at our wells to disinfect the groundwater. This safe and effective method of disinfection is used by drinking water utilities around the globe.

The treated surface water we purchase from BJWSA is drawn from the Savannah River. It is processed and purified at BJWSA's Surface Water Treatment Plants in Chelsea and Purrysburg. The purified water then enters your PSD's water storage tanks and distribution lines via a large pipeline located beneath the Intracoastal Waterway.

To constantly ensure that your drinking water is safe and healthy, the PSD routinely collects water samples for analysis from its wells, treated surface water supplies, storage tanks and numerous strategically located sampling sites throughout the distribution system. In fact, more than 500 samples of PSD drinking water are analyzed during the year to verify the safety of the drinking water we provide to you.

Reverse Osmosis to Provide New Water Supply



This drill rig was used to drill a test well into the Middle Floridan Aquifer on Jenkins Island, across from Windmill Harbour, as part of the PSD's reverse osmosis drinking water treatment plant project.

The water supply coming from our Upper Floridan wells continues to be threatened by saltwater intrusion. Extensive scientific research conducted by the states of South Carolina and Georgia, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the PSD's own groundwater expert, have shown that the intrusion will continue into the foreseeable future. Studies identified the significance of the issue and determined that the single largest reason for the saltwater intrusion is the Savannah, GA, region's over-pumping of the Upper Floridan Aquifer. This over-pumping has shifted the hydrogeology of the Upper Floridan Aquifer and is creating "cones of depression" that bring saltwater into the fresh

water aquifer, thus rendering it unacceptable as a public drinking water supply.

Hilton Head Island's withdrawals from the Upper Floridan Aquifer have been capped by the State of South Carolina since 1997. In that same year, the island's public water utilities spent \$16 million to construct a 24-inch water supply transmission line and related distribution equipment to bring the treated Savannah River surface water to the island.

To combat this continuing threat of saltwater intrusion, Hilton Head PSD is developing a new source of drinking water by constructing a Reverse Osmosis (RO) water treatment plant to provide drinking water from the 600-foot-deep Middle Floridan Aquifer.

There are several reasons why the PSD has chosen this future water supply option:

- RO water is very high-quality drinking water that will minimize taste and odor issues.
- Only a minimum amount of chlorine for additional purification will need to be added.
- The PSD will have a diversity of supply: current Upper Floridan



The PSD's Reclaimed Water nourishes wetlands in Palmetto Hall.

wells; RO from the Middle Floridan; and purchased water from BJWSA.

- It represents the least expensive option for the utility and its customers.

The PSD anticipates that the Reverse Osmosis treatment plant will be operational in 2008.

Reclaimed Water Program

Hilton Head PSD uses a state-of-the-art process to treat wastewater. Our finished product is called Reclaimed Water. It plays a vital role in the island's ecology by providing irrigation water for 11 golf courses – thus conserving our drinking water. Our Reclaimed Water also rejuvenates wetlands in Palmetto Hall and Hilton Head Plantation as part of a state-monitored wetlands management program.

Not only does Reclaimed Water reduce dependence on potable water – drinking water – for irrigation needs; it also improves the aquatic animal and plant life as well as creates a desirable habitat for birds within the wetlands. By employing this treatment method, the District ensures the maximum use of our most precious resource – water.

The Reclaimed Water process mimics, at an accelerated rate, the naturally occurring process of water purification. In the initial phase of treatment, screens and grit chambers remove large solids, as well as sand and gravel, protecting the remaining treatment infrastructure from excessive wear and damage. The wastewater then flows to the aeration basin, where microbes biologically break down and consume the organic matter. After aeration, the water flows to the sedimentation tank, or clarifier where the microbes, now called biosolids, settle out for removal. The water then receives a chlorine injection to destroy any remaining harmful bacteria and microorganisms. Finally, the water undergoes tertiary, or advanced, treatment that removes extremely fine solids and particles. The biosolids produced by the process are dewatered and disposed of in a sanitary landfill.

Water Hardness

Hardness is a measure of the amount of naturally occurring minerals found in water, namely calcium and magnesium. While calcium and magnesium are essential minerals for human health, hardness may cause spotting on dishes and shower walls, affect the lathering of soap or cause deposits on water related fixtures. Depending on the exact blend of water coming from different sources at any given moment, water hardness levels may vary.

To determine the water hardness level in your particular area, you may refer to our website at www.hhpsd.com. The figures are frequently updated so you will have the most current information.

Bucks for a Better Island

A true story

Robert and Jan are longtime Hilton Head Island residents. Robert has developed heart and kidney problems. He is a shrimper, but has not been able to work for some time.

“If any family deserves help, it is this one,” said Robert’s employer. “He is a hard worker, and would work some days when he could hardly drag himself to the dock.”

Jan also works, but her income isn’t enough to pay all of the bills. The couple also has a small child who has experienced health problems. Robert has applied for disability, but has yet to receive approval, and the process can be very lengthy.

When Robert and Jan called the Deep Well Project for assistance, the family was in imminent danger of having its water shut off. Robert and Jan simply had no way to pay their bill.

Hilton Head PSD’s *Bucks for a Better Island* fund was there, helping customers like Robert and Jan in their time of need. Funds from *Bucks for a Better Island* paid Robert and Jan’s water bill.

Robert and Jan’s story is proof that Hilton Head Public Service District’s *Bucks for a Better Island* program is working to help islanders in need. The program has two goals: to help qualified applicants connect to the public sewer system; and to provide assistance to individuals who need help paying their utility bills.

PSD customers contribute to *Bucks for a Better Island* by rounding up their monthly or quarterly utility bills to the next-highest dollar. More than 90 percent of PSD customers participate in *Bucks for a Better Island*. Customers’ bills are automatically rounded up, and customers need only contact the PSD if they do not wish to participate.

Bucks for a Better Island donations are put to work helping to cover the cost of connection to the sewer system for applicants who meet certain income requirements. Hilton Head PSD is implementing a Sewer Master Plan, aimed at providing access to the sewer system for the properties in our service area that do not have access. The PSD has been completing an

array of projects to provide the backbone sewer infrastructure necessary to provide individual lots and subdivisions with access to the sewer system. However, homeowners could be faced with costs in the \$13,000-range to connect their properties to the sewer system. Homeowners who meet income qualifications will be able to apply for connection assistance that utilizes *Bucks for a Better Island* funds.

Many of the homeowners who currently are without access to the sewer system use septic tanks for on-site wastewater disposal. Studies have shown that Hilton Head Island's soils are unsuitable for septic tanks, and many septic tank failures occur near the island's waterways.

The PSD believes that our community's public health and the island's pristine environment depend upon eliminating septic tanks and installing sewers in neighborhoods that have long desired such public service. Contributions to *Bucks for a Better Island* help eliminate septic tanks on Hilton Head by assisting qualified homeowners with connection to the public sewer system.

The Deep Well Project receives a portion of *Bucks for a Better Island* funds as well, and uses these donations to help qualified customers like Robert and Jan pay their utility bills and other water and sewer related costs.

For more information about *Bucks for a Better Island*, please contact our Customer Service Center at (843) 681-5525 or email us at info@hhpsd.com. Please consider a contribution to *Bucks for a Better Island* – the program that truly is *Neighbors Helping Neighbors*.

Financial Assistance for Low-Income Families

For utility bills

The PSD recognizes the needs of low-income families in our community, and PSD customers have a strong tradition of assisting their neighbors in need. Customers can call (843) 681-5525 or visit our Customer Service Center at 21 Oak Park Drive to inquire about financial assistance in covering their PSD utility bill. Assistance is provided by the non-profit Deep Well Project using funding from *Bucks for a Better Island*, the Hilton Head PSD utility bill round-up program. The Deep Well Project is a community assistance organization with a strong tradition of helping PSD customers in need with their utility bills.

For sewer and water hookup costs

Customers in need of financial assistance to cover the costs of hooking up to the public sewer or water system can contact the PSD's Customer Service Center for an application for assistance through either Project SAFE (Sewer Access for Everyone) or the Water Fund. Applicants will need to show proof of income and proof of ownership of the property being connected to the system. Simply call (843) 681-5525 or visit the Customer Service Center at 21 Oak Park Drive for an application.

Both Project SAFE and the Water Fund are administered by the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry. A volunteer committee reviews applications and makes decisions about assistance levels.

Hilton Head PSD customers contribute funding to both Project SAFE and the Water Fund by participating in the *Bucks for a Better Island* utility bill round-up program. Round-up contributions are collected by the PSD and then forwarded to both SAFE and the Water Fund.

The PSD and the Town of Hilton Head Island

The PSD is its own local governmental subdivision and is not a department of the Town of Hilton Head Island. However, the PSD and the Town work closely on an array of issues, from building construction to water supply issues and sewer service implementation.

The Town has partnered with the PSD to work on the issue of installing sewer service in areas of the island that still rely upon septic tanks. Septic tanks have been found to be ill-suited to the island's high groundwater table and sandy soils, resulting in frequent failures. The Town Council has adopted a goal of eliminating septic tank usage on Hilton Head Island, and the Town government has worked to obtain grants to help provide sewer service for low-income property owners.



The PSD and Town also partner on public safety issues, such as hurricane operations and evacuation. The PSD and its services play a key role in both hurricane evacuation and recovery, and we work as a member of the Town's team in both situations.

The PSD's Customer Service Center also houses the Town's 911 Dispatch Center. The 911 dispatchers also handle after-hours dispatching of PSD technicians.



The PSD's Reclaimed Water lagoon can store 30 million gallons of highly-treated Reclaimed Water.

Plant Tours

Hilton Head PSD's Reclaimed Water Plant plays a crucial role in protecting the environment and our water resources here on Hilton Head Island. Wastewater from the District's public sewer system enters our Reclaimed Water Plant on Oak Park Drive and goes through a state-of-the-art treatment process. The end product – Reclaimed Water – is sold to 11 golf courses on the island for use in irrigation. Reclaimed Water also is sent to wetlands in Hilton Head Plantation and Palmetto Hall as part of a state-monitored wetlands nourishment program, helping to maintain the delicate balance of our island ecology.

We would be glad to give you or your group a tour of our Reclaimed Water Plant. Simply contact our Customer Service Center at (843) 681-5525 or email us at info@hhpsd.com to request a tour.

Touch-Read Meters

The District has installed “touch-read” meters for all customers.

These state-of-the-art meters provide several benefits for customers and PSD staff. Because the meter data is transmitted automatically to handheld devices carried by our meter readers, customers can be assured of accurate readings and protection against “human error.” The touch-read system also aides in the efficiency of District meter readers, allowing

our staff to collect more readings in a shorter period of time, using less manpower.

Meter readers simply “touch” the hand-held device to the top of your property’s meter box, and the reading is transmitted and recorded.

The touch-read meters are a great example of the District utilizing technology to provide accurate, efficient service to our customers.

The Sewer Extension and Connection Effort

Water and sewer service represents one of the most costly, yet fundamental, community infrastructure investments. Accessibility to adequate water and wastewater systems can have a significant impact on human health and the natural environment. The PSD estimates that about 18 percent of properties in our service area currently lack access to the sewer system, relying instead upon septic tanks. Both the PSD Commission and the Town Council of Hilton Head Island have adopted the goal of eliminating the use of septic tanks on the island.

In the absence of sewer systems, homes must rely upon individual septic systems to treat household waste products. These systems generally consist of a tank where solid materials are settled from the waste and a drain field that distributes the water over a large area of subsurface soil. However, the use of septic systems is severely limited on Hilton Head Island by a combination of permeable soils, a high water table, flooding frequency, and low elevation. Septic tank failures can lead to system back-up and the run-off of contaminants such as fecal coliform, which can cause illnesses such as hepatitis, salmonella, dysentery, and staph infections. Such failures also can jeopardize local water quality and negatively impact wildlife habitat, recreational use, and commercial fishing in surrounding wetlands and water bodies.

These limitations make access to the public sewer system a critical component for improving and maintaining the quality of life on Hilton Head Island. A 2000 study conducted in cooperation with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) included fecal coliform testing in Hilton Head Island creeks adjacent to residential areas lacking sewer service. The tests noted the presence of human origin fecal coliform bacteria and the continued potential for contamination until the septic systems have been removed and replaced with sewer connections. The report also noted the harmful impact of septic systems on area shellfish beds. An informal study conducted by the PSD Commission in 2005 documented more than 300 septic tank failures on the island in a two-year period. The use of septic systems also

has adverse implications for the island's water supply. An earlier study by the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (DNR) concluded that the shallow aquifer that provides the island's water is vulnerable to contamination – making the continued use of septic systems inadvisable and a potential public health threat.

Despite the island's reputation as home to wealthy retirees and resort development, there are a significant number of island residents who are low income and who lack basic public services such as sewer. A surprisingly large number of households on the island are not served by a centralized sewer system and must rely on faulty septic tank systems for wastewater disposal. These households face increased public health risks associated with septic system back-up, leakage and failure. As a result, access and provision of sewer service has been identified as one of the most urgent needs of low income and predominantly minority neighborhoods on Hilton Head Island.

The PSD, in its most recent Sewer Master Plan, identified 20 sub-areas on the island that currently do not have sewer service, with approximately 1,650 residential households relying solely on septic tanks. Town and PSD staffs estimate that potentially 600 or more of the 1,650 households not served by sewer may be low income, minority households. Individual and community surveys conducted by the Town of Hilton Head in the unserved, predominantly minority neighborhoods confirm that most of these residents do not have sewer service due to the high connection costs. The PSD faces a multi-million-dollar effort to create access to the system for these neighborhoods and households exceeds by constructing extensions and performing system upgrades. However, this costly expansion effort only represents the necessary steps to make the sewer system accessible to these unserved properties and does not include the costs associated with individual home connections. Once the system is available, these residents face an average cost of \$13,000 per household to connect to the system.

To address the community need for sewer service, the PSD and its many community partners – the Town of Hilton Head Island, the Lowcountry Community Development Corporation, Project SAFE (Sewer Access For Everyone), the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry, and the Native Island Business and Community Affairs Association (NIBCAA) – have united in an effort to ensure that low income residents on the island have an opportunity to connect to the sewer system. These groups have launched a concerted effort to identify and pursue alternative funding sources to support the expansion of sewer infrastructure to low income communities and the connection of households to the system. The PSD also re-tooled the *Bucks for a Better Island* program to collect donations through customer bill round-up to be used to fund sewer connections to

low-income island residents. *Bucks for a Better Island* now generates more than \$34,000 in annual donations toward the sewer access initiative, and enjoys participation by more than 90 percent of PSD customers. However, additional external funding will be required to bring sewer access to island families in need and mitigate the potential danger to public health and the natural environment.

Much work already has been done to install the backbone sewer infrastructure identified in the Sewer Master Plan, and the PSD continues its policy of requiring new sewer infrastructure for new development to be built in a manner that provides sewer access to existing neighborhoods. It is our sincere commitment to the residents of Hilton Head Island to see the sewer extension and connection effort through to its completion. We owe it to future generations of islanders to protect public health and preserve our delicate island ecology.

Low-Pressure Sewer Systems

Hilton Head PSD has approved the use of low-pressure sewer systems in our service area, in an effort to provide access to the public sewer system for existing properties that are currently relying upon septic tanks. Septic tanks have been shown to be ill-suited for the island's high groundwater table and sandy soils, resulting in frequent failures and emergency pumpings of septic tanks.



The Oak Marsh neighborhood off Spanish Wells Road was the first to receive a Low-Pressure Sewer system from the PSD. At left is a Low-Pressure Sewer pump unit, which grinds household waste and pumps it into the PSD's public sewer system.

We're excited about the introduction of low-pressure sewer systems in our service area. We believe it gives us an excellent option to use in existing neighborhoods where septic tanks are still being used, including large-lot subdivisions that would have required more expensive gravity sewer main installations.

The Oak Marsh subdivision off Spanish Wells Road was the first neighborhood to receive the low-pressure sewer system in 2006. Oak Marsh property owners have experienced failing septic tanks and approached the PSD seeking connection to the sewer system. A Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) project in the Squire Pope Road area also utilized low-pressure sewer.

This type of sewer system uses a grinder pump that works similar to a garbage disposal and is located outside and adjacent to the home it is servicing. The unit is buried. Solid materials in the household wastewater are ground into a liquid form and then pumped out into a pressurized small-diameter pipe and transported to the PSD's conventional gravity sewer system. The pressurized lines eliminate the need for gravity to force the wastewater from homes to the gravity sewer system. In many cases, the low-pressure sewer pipes can be bored into the ground – rather than placed in trenches like gravity sewer mains. That means less construction disruption to neighborhoods, such as tree removal and tearing up roads in order to bury gravity sewer lines. These features make the low-pressure sewer system an excellent alternative for existing neighborhoods.

The PSD will be responsible for the maintenance of all low-pressure sewer systems. The maintenance-friendly construction of the systems, and their internal storage capacity, means that customers who experience the rare event of a problem will not be out of service for long.

The PSD plans to install low-pressure sewer systems primarily in existing neighborhoods currently served by septic tanks. It normally will not be used for new development, nor for commercial development.

As the PSD works to install the backbone sewer infrastructure necessary to provide sewer access to the customers in our service area that currently lack access, low-pressure sewer systems will help eliminate the need to construct costly sewer lift stations in several areas.

For more information about low-pressure sewer, and to find out if it's right for your neighborhood, please contact the PSD at (843) 681-5525 or info@hhpsd.com.

Hurricanes and Your Water Service

In the event of a hurricane, Hilton Head Public Service District has developed a detailed emergency operations plan to protect both the water distribution system and the wastewater treatment facility, as well as ensure the safety of District employees and customers. Please review the information below to protect both your home and your family in the event of a hurricane.

In case of an evacuation, when will water service be discontinued?

For most areas of the PSD, the water system will remain pressurized. However, in certain areas where mains are vulnerable to wash-out from tidal surges, water service will be shut down prior to the arrival of gale force winds. Additional areas of the PSD are subject to shut-down or loss of pressure if a water main break occurs and cannot be repaired without placing utility personnel in danger.

Will the sanitary sewer system continue to function during an evacuation?

To prevent damage from flooding or sand, all sewer lift stations are shut down prior to the arrival of gale force winds. While the gravity sewers may function for a limited time, there is no guarantee. It depends on how much flow enters the system from flooding or from homes where people do not evacuate. In other words, “flush with caution.”

Can the PSD turn off water service to my residence if I am evacuating?

Your residence should have a separate shut-off valve on your side of the meter box or just prior to the point where your water service line enters the foundation of your home. The PSD will respond to requests to shut off individual water service only if personnel are available. There is a \$35 charge for the PSD to return to your residence to turn the water back on. For more information, please see the section “Finding Your Water Shut-Off Valve” on page 28.

How much water should I store for use during or after the storm?

For drinking purposes, store at least $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon per person per day, including supplies for at least two days following the storm. When factoring in hygiene and sanitary uses, we recommend you store a total of at least 2 to 3 gallons per day for each person and pet. Use clean plastic containers with tight-fitting lids and fill all the way to the top so there is no air. As long as the container remains sealed, the water will have a shelf life of several months. Once a container of either tap water or bottled water is opened, it should be used within three days unless refrigerated.

Will PSD personnel remain present during an evacuation?

PSD personnel evacuate the island at the same time as do Town of Hilton Head Island personnel, which is prior to the arrival of sustained gale force winds.

How long does it take to get the water and sewer systems operational after a storm?

PSD personnel return to the island at the same time as Town of Hilton Head Island personnel. While it depends on the extent of damage, it can take a minimum of twelve hours or more, assuming no major damage has occurred, to restore the sewer system to operational status and to verify that the drinking water is safe.

How do I find out if my tap water is safe for drinking after the storm?

As you are returning to your residence after an evacuation, check one of the following sources of information:

- Tune to local radio stations.
- Call the PSD's automated info line at 681-0555.
- Check the PSD's website at www.hhpsd.com.

Any areas that lose water service during the storm are automatically under a boil water advisory for at least 24 hours after water service is restored, or until notice is given otherwise. It is recommended that you use your stored water for drinking until safety of the tap water is verified.

How can I make tap water safe by boiling?

Use water from the cold water tap only. Heat the water in a clean container until it reaches a full boil, and continue boiling for at least three minutes. You can accelerate cooling by pouring the water back and forth between containers. Note that the boiling of water removes the chlorine or chloramine disinfectant residual. Boiled water should be used soon after it cools. Otherwise, refrigerate it or add a commercially available disinfectant tablet, which can be found at most camping supply stores.

Preparation is the key to a safe hurricane season. If you have questions about hurricane preparation, please contact the Beaufort County Emergency Management Department at (843) 470-3100, or visit the National Hurricane Center on the Web at www.nhc.noaa.gov.

The Beaufort County Hurricane Information Line is (800) 963-5023. Keep this number with you in the event of an evacuation and call it for

updates on reentry and other important information.



The PSD and Clemson Extension Service

Hilton Head PSD encourages our customers to practice both indoor and outdoor water conservation. The PSD partners with the Clemson University Extension Service to provide customer education about water conservation and environmentally friendly landscape and lawn care practices. Clemson Extension workshops are held in the PSD's Community Room, which also is home to the Extension Service's Master Gardener program on Hilton Head Island. Look for announcements about upcoming presentations in the local newspaper and on the PSD website at www.hhpsd.com.

Clemson Extension offers a program entitled Carolina Yards & Neighborhoods that teaches nine principles toward creating a landscape that uses less water and requires less maintenance. Carolina Yards & Neighborhoods workbooks and CD-ROMs are available at the PSD Customer Service Center. Carolina Yards & Neighborhoods can be found on the internet at www.clemson.edu/cyn.

There are a variety of free resources available to help you learn more about water conservation. Below are links to sources we recommend:

Clemson Extension Service main office: www.clemson.edu/extension.

Clemson Extension Service Beaufort County office:

www.clemson.edu/beaufort.

The American Water Works Association (AWWA): www.awwa.org.

The Water Environment Federation (WEF): www.wef.org.

The H2ouse: www.h2ouse.org.

Clemson Extension's Beaufort County office can be reached at (843) 470-3655.

A Word About Irrigation

Hilton Head PSD believes it is each property owner's duty to irrigate responsibly in order to conserve our greatest natural resource – water. The Town of Hilton Head Island has adopted the following irrigation ordinance, and the PSD strongly encourages property owners to adhere to this local law:

Town of Hilton Head Island Municipal Code Sec. 17-10-211.

Exterior landscape irrigation restricted.

Exterior landscape irrigation is hereby limited to the following days for all

customers within the town limits, as follows:

(1) *Detached, single-family residential with even-numbered address:* Exterior landscape irrigation is permitted for customers having an even-numbered address on Tuesdays and Saturdays only.

(2) *Detached, single-family residential with odd-numbered address:* Exterior landscape irrigation is permitted for customers having an odd-numbered address on Wednesdays and Sundays only.

(3) *Commercial/office/institutional hotels and motels on a separately platted lot of record:* Exterior landscape irrigation is permitted for customers on Mondays and Thursdays only.

(4) *Common areas and locations having no street address, box number or rural route number:* Exterior landscape irrigation is permitted for customers on Mondays and Thursdays only.

Sewer rates are capped

The PSD also has adopted a cap on residential sewer rates that prevents customers from paying a sewer bill for irrigating their lawns and gardens. Here's how it works: Sewer volume charges are based on the amount of water used per month. The PSD caps the sewer volume charge at 10,000 gallons of water used per month. The figure of 10,000 gallons is used because that is the amount of water an average household on Hilton Head Island uses per month for indoor purposes, such as bathing, cooking, washing clothes, and washing dishes. The 10,000-gallon figure was determined after extensive studies by the PSD, and the sewer rate cap is a direct result of the PSD responding to customer concerns about paying sewer bills for lawn irrigation.

Information about irrigation

The Clemson University Extension Service, Hilton Head PSD's customer education partner, is a tremendous source of information on lawn and garden care in the South Carolina Lowcountry. Visit the Extension Service online at www.clemson.edu/extension, and visit Beaufort County's Extension Service office at www.clemson.edu/beaufort or contact them at (843) 470-3655.

Flushing Your Water Heater

Many of us take for granted the hot water that water heaters provide to our home on a daily basis. However, proper maintenance, including regular flushing, is essential to prolonging the life of the device and avoiding costly repairs.

As water goes through the device, mineral content settles at the bottom of the heater. As the sediment hardens, it provides a buffer area between the heating device and the water, reducing the heater's ability to heat the

water. Accumulated sediment may eventually clog the drain valve, as well. You can avoid excessive mineral build-up by draining the water heater regularly.

Following are some guidelines for flushing your water heater. Gas and electric heaters vary slightly, so be sure to read thoroughly before you begin. Please note that the following information is provided for general information purposes only. It is recommended that you refer to your manufacturer's direction for specific instructions.

Step 1 – For gas water heaters, turn the gas control knob to the 'off' position. If you are not familiar with procedures for relighting your gas water heater, please consult with a plumber or gas supplier. With electrical water heaters, shut off electricity to the water heater at the circuit breaker panel.

Step 2 – Turn on all cold water taps in the home, including faucets and showers. All of the taps should be running simultaneously. This allows fresh water from the street to flush the home's interior plumbing.

Step 3 – Allow the taps to run for two to three minutes.

Step 4 – Shut off all cold water taps.

Step 5 – Turn on all hot water taps in the home at the same time, including faucets and showers. All of the taps should be running simultaneously. This scours the interior of the water heater, as well as the home's interior plumbing.

Step 6 – Allow the taps to run until the water becomes cold, and until there is no sediment nor odor coming from the taps.

Step 7 – Shut off all hot water taps.

Step 8 – Restore the electricity to water heater at circuit breaker panel. Hot water should be available within 30 – 45 minutes. For gas water heaters, follow your manufacturer's lighting instructions or contact a gas supplier.

There are several factors to consider for determining the frequency of draining the water heater. High mineral content and water hardness levels necessitate more frequent draining. You can refer to the "Water Hardness Levels" page on the PSD website, www.hhpsd.com, for information specific to your area. In addition, excessive hot water use may require a greater frequency. However, because recommendations vary among models, you should consult with the manufacturer or product manual to determine specific time frames for draining your water heater.

Please contact the Hilton Head Public Service District should you have any questions regarding the flushing of your water heater at (843) 681-5525.

*** The Hilton Head Public Service District makes no warranties nor representations and assumes no liability for physical injury or property damage in any way related to or arising out of the above procedures or the draining of your water heater. Always consult your manufacturer's instructions for safety procedures before draining your water heater.**

Finding Your Water Shut-Off Valve

Knowing the location of your home's water shut-off valve is crucial to minimizing damage, and costly repairs, in the event of a water leak on your property.

For most homes, your water shut-off valve most likely is located on the exterior of your home, nearest the point where the water line from the street connects to your home.

Some homes may have a water shut-off valve inside the garage. This is especially true of homes that have water softener units in their garages.

For other homes, the shut-off valve is located inside a small box adjacent to your water meter box, which is located on your property near the street. Look for a small green or black box in front of the meter box, and your shut-off valve is inside.

If you have questions about your water shut-off valve, please contact the PSD's Customer Service Center at (843) 681-5525 or email us at info@hhpsd.com.

PSD Taxes

The PSD levies taxes on property values. The PSD has two tax levies, one to help cover the cost of operations and one to assist in debt repayment. PSD taxes are collected via your Beaufort County property tax bill.

Rates and Fees

Below are tables and explanations of the PSD's water and sewer rates, as well as its construction and development related fees. Depending upon where you live or work within the PSD, you are billed either quarterly or monthly for water and sewer.

Monthly Water Rates:

	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL
BASE CHARGE	\$10.00	\$15.00

	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL
USAGE/GALLONS	(\$/1000 GAL)	(\$/1000 GAL)
First 5,000 Gallons	1.25	1.50
Next 12,000 Gallons	1.50	1.75
Next 15,000 Gallons	1.75	2.00
Over 32,000 Gallons	2.00	2.25

Monthly Sewer Rates:

	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL
BASE CHARGE	\$12.00	\$12.00

All residential users, including Multi-Family Residential with Master Meter, will also pay \$1.90 per 1,000 gallons of metered water usage; residential users cap at 10,000 gallons.

All Commercial users pay \$1.50 per 1,000 gallons of metered water usage. There is no cap for commercial users.

Quarterly Water Rates:

	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL
BASE CHARGE	\$30.00	\$45.00

	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL
USAGE/GALLONS	(\$/1000 GAL)	(\$/1000 GAL)
First 15,000 Gallons	1.25	1.50
Next 36,000 Gallons	1.50	1.75
Next 55,000 Gallons	1.75	2.00
Over 96,000 Gallons	2.00	2.25

Quarterly Sewer Rates:

	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL
BASE CHARGE	\$36.00	\$36.00

All residential users, including Multi-Family Residential with Master

Meter, will also pay \$1.90 per 1,000 gallons of metered water usage; residential users cap at 30,000 gallons quarterly (10,000 gallons per month).

All Commercial users pay \$1.50 per 1,000 gallons of metered water usage. There is no cap for commercial users.

Late Fee:

The PSD charges a late fee of \$5 or 1 percent of the bill amount, whichever is greater, for bills that are more than 30 days past due.

Reconnection Fee:

Service will be terminated on any account which is 30 days past due. All outstanding charges and a \$35 reconnection fee will be collected before service is restored. Service is restored during business hours from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

Returned Check Fee:

The PSD charges \$15 for returned checks. If a check is returned, the amount of the check will be charged back to the customer's account and payment must be made by cash, credit card, money order, or cashier's check within 15 business days of notification, in order to avoid termination of service.

Availability Fee:

The PSD charges both a Water Availability Fee and a Sewer Availability Fee. These fees are charged to properties that have water and/or sewer service available, but are not connected to the systems. These fees apply to vacant lots as well as homes and businesses that are not connected to the services. A property can be charged one or both fees. All lots within 100 feet of an existing gravity sewer main or an existing water main with the ability to provide immediate service are charged availability fees, with the following exceptions:

- Unbuildable lots.
- Lots without free and easy access to the nearest main.

Unbuildable lots are: Designated Wetlands; Inundated Property; and Designated Open Space. Lots without free and easy access to the nearest main are lots within 100 feet of the main, but where no public road right-of-way nor easement exists, which therefore would require crossing

another piece of property to serve the subject property.

The Water Availability Fee is \$100 per year. The Sewer Availability Fee is \$300 per year. Dividable lots of more than two (2) acres are charged a Water Availability Fee of \$200 per year, and a Sewer Availability Fee of \$600 per year.

Availability Fees are collected through a customer's Beaufort County property tax bill.

Construction Fees:

Construction fees shall be paid when the actual connections for service are made. Construction fees are as follows:

- A. Water Meter Installation Fee (Existing Service Line)
 - ¾ Inch Meter \$355
 - 1 Inch Meter \$490
 - 1-1/2 Inch Meter and Above Time and Materials
- B. Water Meter Installation Fee (No Existing Service Line)
 - ¾ Inch and 1 Inch Meters \$1,020
 - 1-1/2 Inch and Above Meters Time and Materials

The PSD charges a one-time Sewer Inspection Fee of \$100 to new customers at the time they connect to the sewer system. The fee covers the cost of the PSD inspecting the new connection to make sure it meets PSD requirements.

- A. Sewer Service Installation Fee
 - Individual 4 Inch Lateral: \$1,200
- B. Main Extensions, Laterals above 4 Inches,
and Mains Greater than 6 feet in depth: Time and Materials

Capacity Fee:

A Capacity Fee is a one-time charge to new development or to new customers, where money has not been previously paid, to cover the capital costs spent to provide a given service. The PSD charges both a Water Capacity Fee and a Sewer Capacity Fee. These one-time fees are charged when a property connects to the water or sewer system. In the case of new development, however, the fees are due at the time the PSD agrees to provide service. The fee could be more aptly termed a "system development fee," because the PSD uses the funds from this fee to cover the cost of system extensions or upgrades required to provide the

water and sewer services. The PSD developed its Sewer Capacity Fee by calculating a new customer's pro rata share of the PSD system expansions and upgrades necessary to provide sewer access to all unserved areas within the PSD.

The Sewer Capacity Fee is \$3,040 per residential unit. The Water Capacity Fee is \$2,400 per unit.

The PSD offers a one-year, interest-free payment plan for Capacity Fees. The installments are placed on a customer's utility bill. Capacity fees also can be financed over a 20-year period when financed along with a Front-Foot Assessment.

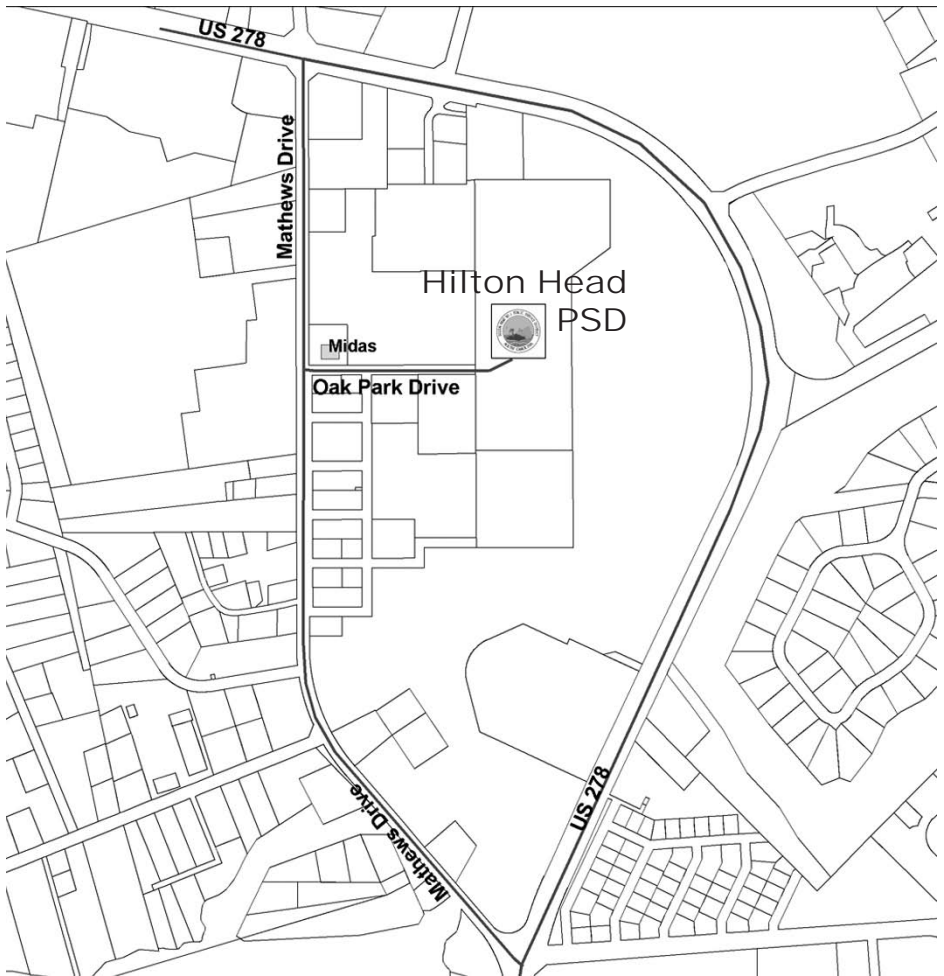
Front-Foot Assessment:

A Front-Foot Assessment is a pro rata share of the costs associated with bringing water and/or sewer service to a particular area. For instance, the costs of having to install a sewer main and/or repave a road as a result of putting sewer infrastructure into a neighborhood are divided amongst the properties receiving the sewer service. Following a project to provide water or sewer service, the Front-Foot Assessment is charged to property owners, in addition to Capacity and Connection fees.

An example of a typical Front-Foot Assessment cost for sewer service, per homeowner, would be \$6,200. However, that cost can vary depending upon the specifics of the sewer project.

The PSD allows the long-term financing of a Front-Foot Assessment by placing it on a customer's Beaufort County property tax bill over a 20-year period, plus interest. When a property owner chooses this option, the PSD also allows the Capacity Fee to be financed over 20 years.

Driving Directions:



**Hilton Head PSD
21 Oak Park Drive
Hilton Head Island, SC 29926
(843) 681-5525**

**Office Hours:
8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday - Friday**

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