

# BRIGHTWATER TREATMENT PLANT *NEWS*



**King County**  
Department of  
Natural Resources and Parks  
**Wastewater Treatment  
Division**

**Spring 2024**

## Wrapping up the rainy season

Our region has a reputation for wet winters. Storm clouds stream in from the Pacific Ocean. Our mountains squeeze rain from the clouds.

As we head into spring and summer, we can look forward to sunnier and drier days ahead. The drier months are a good time for us to maintain our facilities and carry out projects across our regional wastewater system.

King County's Wastewater Treatment Division (WTD) protects public health and the environment by collecting and cleaning wastewater. Brightwater Treatment Plant (Brightwater) is part of this regional wastewater system and serves parts of north King County and south Snohomish County.

Read on to learn how Brightwater Operations prepares for the Pacific Northwest rainy season. You will also learn how you can prepare to help protect your property and regional water systems when the storms arrive!



*A King County operator shows operators in training and a safety officer what's happening in the Brightwater treatment system.*



*Even when it looks nice outside, King County is preparing for the effects of our region's legendary rainy season.*

## WTD prepares year round

### MAINTAINING EQUIPMENT

The WTD Operations team works on various maintenance projects during drier months, when there is less wastewater flowing through our system. This work helps ensure we deliver reliable service year round, especially during the rainy season when we see higher flows.

### PREPARING EMPLOYEES

Operators train throughout the year to make sure they are ready for any incident or emergency. In the fall, teams participate in wet weather response trainings. These trainings keep the team working together smoothly when the weather is at its worst.

### UPGRADING OPERATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

When wastewater comes into Brightwater, the first step is to filter out trash, solids, and fats. Then, Brightwater's membrane filtration systems remove the leftover small particles. The membrane fibers act like a straw sucking up to 40 million gallons of water a day. Those membranes need periodic cleaning to work effectively.

In 2023, Brightwater crews began replacing the membrane modules for the first time since the plant started operating in 2011. This process will take three years and needs to be completed every 10 to 20 years.



*A King County mechanic maintains odor control equipment at Brightwater.*

## What goes into the membrane filtration system?

**160** membrane cassettes,

**48** individual modules are racked into each cassette,

Over **2,200** membrane fibers are in each module,

A total of over **17 million** membranes making up the system.

**When finished, over 2.6 million square feet of membranes will have been replaced.**



*A King County utility worker and a contractor work together to install new membrane filters.*

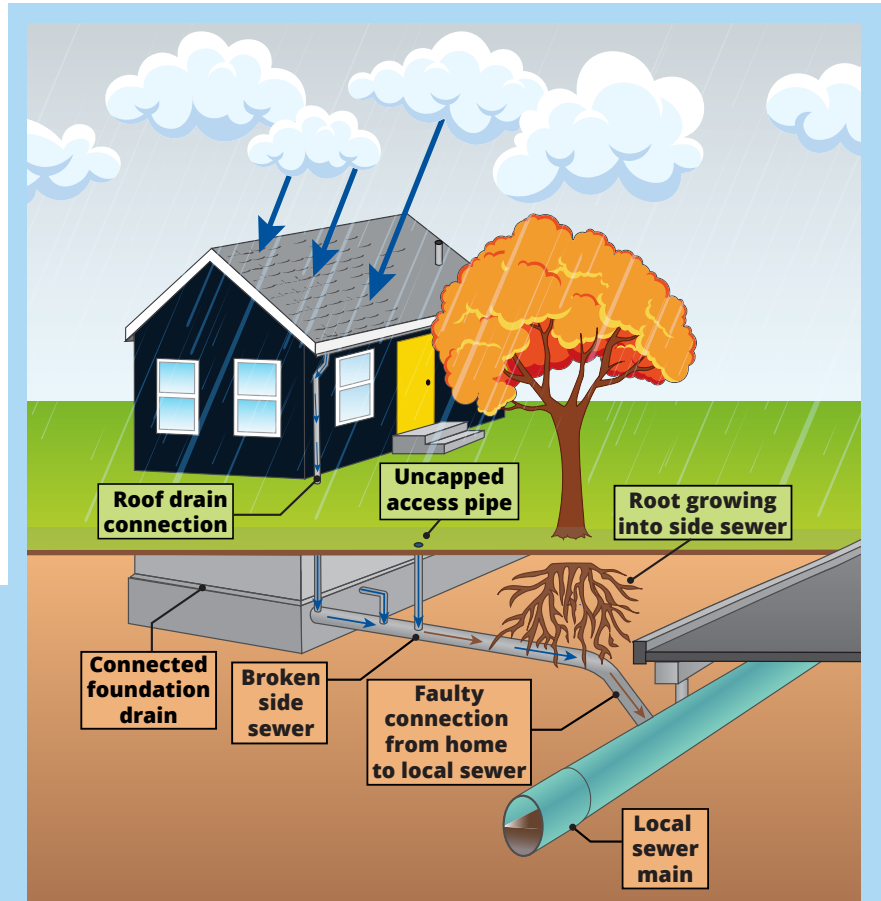
Read more on the WTD blog.  
[kingcountywtd.com](http://kingcountywtd.com)



## Where you come into the picture

You make a difference in how our system operates, rain or shine. Drier months in spring and summer are a good time for people to start preparing their homes and businesses before the next rainy season.

The image to the right shows how groundwater and rainwater can get into the sewer. Cracks from old pipes and tree roots let groundwater seep in. Roof drains attached to the sewer also send rain into the pipes.



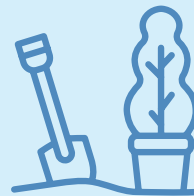
**This is called inflow and infiltration – and it’s a big problem. When groundwater and stormwater flow into the system, it takes up space in wastewater pipes and treatment plants. Processing this extra clean water increases equipment wear, costs, and power consumption.**

## Here are some things you can do to help



### INSPECT AND MAINTAIN YOUR SIDE SEWER.

Schedule periodic inspections of your side sewer by a plumbing professional.



### PLANT A UTILITY-FRIENDLY LANDSCAPE.

Avoid planting trees that are drain seekers! Check city and utility websites for advice on landscaping around underground and overhead utilities.



### DISCONNECT YOUR DOWNSPOUTS FROM THE SEWER.

Check to make sure that downspouts, yard drains, and sump pumps are connected to the storm system, not the sewer system.



### KEEP YOUR RAIN TO YOURSELF!

Use rain barrels, cisterns, and rain gardens to keep your rainwater on site, reducing runoff and protecting our waters.

## Get prepared and stay connected this year!

Everyone can be prepared for the rainy season with these online resources:

**KING COUNTY**



**SNOHOMISH COUNTY**



### Learn more

Visit our website and sign up for email or text updates.



Para obtener los materiales traducidos, visite [kingcounty.gov/Brightwater](https://kingcounty.gov/Brightwater)

要获取翻译好的资料，请访问 [kingcounty.gov/Brightwater](https://kingcounty.gov/Brightwater)。

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### Contact us



[kingcounty.gov/ContactBrightwater](https://kingcounty.gov/ContactBrightwater)

24 hour emergency and  
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[kingcounty.gov/Brightwater](https://kingcounty.gov/Brightwater)

Alternative formats available

206-477-5371 or TTY relay: 711

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