

Dear RainWise Contractors,

Welcome to the second edition of our RainWise Contractor Newsletter! The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with important program updates and events.

We have two particularly important program updates to share this edition: **the closure of the Barton/Fauntleroy Basin in December 2016** and the announcement of **the RainWise Pilot Access Loan**. Please read about these updates and more below.

Seattle Public Utilities and King County greatly appreciate the work you are doing to help us reduce sewer overflows and keep pollutants out of our waterways. Thank you!

Wishing you a wonderful holiday season,



Laura Cacho, Program Manager

RainWise Pilot Access Loan to Provide Upfront Money for Installations

We are excited to announce the new RainWise Pilot Access Loan program offered by Craft3, a local nonprofit CDFI lender, and Stewardship Partners with funding from the King Conservation District-Seattle Community Partnership Grant Program!

We understand that cash flow can be a problem if you are working with customers that cannot pay you upfront for your work. Contractors approved for a Craft3 loan can get up to 50 percent of the estimated rebate

amount after the pre-inspection and then the remaining rebate amount immediately once the project is complete. Craft3 charges a small fee to cover their expenses.

If you are interested in this program, be sure to sign up soon! The one-time initial underwriting fee will be waived for contractors who sign up by 1/31/16.

For more information or to sign-up, please visit www.Craft3.org/RainWise.



Customers Need Help with Maintenance



Hopefully you are finding the **new Maintenance Guide** you received in September to be a useful tool for your customers. We have begun revisiting older RainWise installations to see how well the projects are performing over time. What we can tell you so far is that maintenance is a challenge for many of our customers, particularly those with rain gardens.

Many customers do not know which plants in their rain gardens are weeds and what to replant when a plant dies. When you finish a project, consider giving your customer a list of the plants installed and talking to them about each plant's needs. Including plant photos will help too. When your RainWise installation looks good and performs well over time, it helps the program achieve its goals and helps you attract new customers.

ASK AN INSPECTOR

Q The RainWise website says a property is only eligible for a cistern. My client really wants a rain garden. Is the website's ruling on eligibility always right?

A RainWise team members have a mantra that we like to repeat when this question comes up: **"Topography always trumps technology."**

A field inspection is the best way to answer this question. If the property is not on a steep slope and it passes the infiltration test, a rain garden may be allowed by our inspectors.

However, keep in mind that the opposite is also true: just because the website says a property is eligible for a rain garden does not mean it is appropriate. Our new website is better at determining eligibility, which is why some of you have noticed that the eligibility of some addresses have changed, but technology cannot catch all field scenarios.

No matter what the computer says, if it is obvious from the site's slope or other factors that an installation is inappropriate, don't build it.

Contact Us

- For general questions about the program: rainwise@seattle.gov
- To schedule a pre- or post-inspection: inspectionrequest@seattle.gov or call 206-684-0100
- For questions about an installation or a specific property, please contact your Seattle Public Utilities or King County RainWise inspector.



Interested in Networking with RainWise Contractors?

SPU and King County are considering hosting a winter workshop for RainWise contractors. This purpose of this workshop would be to network with each other and to share lessons learned and ideas. We would provide the space, some light refreshments, and be around to answer questions, but most of the talking and sharing would be led by you. If this sounds interesting to you and you would be willing to participate in a conference call to help us select a date and plan the details, please email Laura Cacho at Laura.Cacho@seattle.gov.

Avoid Customer Confusion Over Charges

We know that you have a business to run, and that part of running a business is making money. This means that you must charge for your services. However, the many ways of charging is causing confusion for our customers.



Some contractors offer a free initial consultation, others charge for the first visit. Some contractors charge for the initial work only if the customer backs out of a contract. Some contractors require a payment upfront, varying from a small percentage to 100 percent. Some contractors do not charge anything upfront, and if they work

within the rebate amount and use the Vendor Payment Option, no money is exchanged with the customer. **The bottom line: many RainWise customers are confused.**

Some customers have also never worked with a contractor before and do not know what to expect.

To help with customer confusion, please **let your customers know about your fees when you first speak with them** and make sure they fully understand before you visit their property, **particularly if you charge for an initial consultation or will require a large portion of the installation cost upfront.**

Most of the complaints we receive relate to receiving a bill for an initial consultation that was unexpected or finding out they need to pay a large portion of the project cost upfront.

We appreciate your attention to this, and please let us know if there is anything we can do to help reduce customer confusion.

Barton/Fauntleroy Basin to Close in 2016

With King County's Barton CSO Control project and roadside rain gardens now complete, rebates will end in the King County's Barton/Fauntleroy basin as of **December 31, 2016**. If you have potential customers in this area, please urge them to get the process started now! RainWise rebates in the Barton/Fauntleroy basin must meet this timeline:

7/1/16 – Contractors must schedule a pre-inspection (the pre-inspection can take place after 7/1 but it **MUST** be scheduled before this date).

7/2/16 – Basin is closed to new customers.

8/30/16 – Pre-inspections must be complete.

10/15/16 – Construction must be underway.

12/16/15 – Post-inspections must be complete. Please schedule well ahead of this deadline.

12/30/16 – Rebate packages must be complete and submitted.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Jo Sullivan at jo.sullivan@kingcounty.gov, or call 206-477-5528.



INSPECTOR TIP! A lot of side sewers are not being capped. Bring extra side sewer caps with you to the post inspection, so you can fix this issue with the inspector.

If you no longer want to be part of the RainWise Program, please email rainwise@seattle.gov.