



E-NEWS

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Rate Increase Approved

On April 27, 2010 the Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission approved an increase in rates to correct for realized shortfall in revenue resultant from a downturn in sales and a Providence Water rate increase in wholesale water cost. These increases in rates did not increase the previous RIPUC approved budgeted expenditures so no increase in revenue expenditures were requested. In fact, a decrease in expenditures towards purchased wholesale water was recognized and removed from the overall operating budget as part of the process. The rates went into effect April 27, 2010 and a prorated increase will be seen in your billing cycle.

Leaks, Leaks, Leaks, It's To Late Once The Bill Arrives!

Ignoring a dripping faucet or a running toilet could be a costly proposition. Many of us have noticed a slow drip in our kitchen, bathroom or outside faucet. At that time we think, I am going to fix it as soon as I get a chance. How about jiggling the handle on the toilet to stop it from running or the middle of the night phantom flush? These are all signs of leaks from worn and failing parts. Somehow time goes on and we just never got to the repair.

Then comes the water bill and you think how can this be? There must be something wrong with the meter. These types of events not only result in wasted water but they can add dollars to your quarterly water bill. Many times, our customers are shocked at how much water a dripping faucet or running toilet can waste.

If you have a dripping faucet or running toilet, fix it yourself or have it fixed right away. You will be glad you did.

Some toilet leaks are very obvious and you can hear the water running. Others are silent and often go undetected - until you get your bill. There is a way to check your toilet for a leak. Use one of our free dye tablet test kits available at our office. Add a dye tablet to the toilet tank. Follow the instructions and wait; if you see dye appearing in the toilet bowl there is a good chance that there is a leaky flap valve that you should have replaced. If no dye appears, the toilet valve is functioning properly.

Shutoff For Nonpayment On The Rise

Over the past four billing periods we have seen a marked increase in delinquent accounts. Failure to make payment on your bill eventually leads to a shutoff notice and subsequent discontinuance of service. The charge for shutoff of a delinquent account is \$55.00. After payment of the delinquent amount the turn on charge is \$45.00. This amounts to an additional \$100.00 dollars added to the delinquent amount before water service can be restored to your property. It is very important that you contact us as soon as you think you may not be able to make payment within the normal 30 day billing grace period. At that time, we can discuss options for payment and perhaps offer a onetime payment plan to get you through a tough period and avoid the shutoff and turn on charges. If you stay within your payment structure it will save you from the additional \$100.00 charge associated with the shutoff and turn on policy.

Springtime Gardening & Lawn Care

Spring is here and the heat of the summer will soon be upon us. This is the time of year most of us get our lawns and gardens back into shape. These types of activities often require an increase in outdoor water use to maintain your plantings.

Water is a precious resource and it should be used wisely. Daily water use during the summer months can be almost double the daily water use during the winter months, which means you would realize your billed amount doubled long after you have used the water. Because of this cycle, it is very easy to see that most of this increase is attributed to outdoor water use for lawns, gardens,

car washing, swimming pools and other recreational activities. In itself, unmonitored lawn irrigation comprises the most wasteful summer season water use factor.

We understand the desire for a green, healthy lawn. A healthy lawn should go dormant in the summer. This is natural and does not hurt your lawn. It is the “green” way of landscaping. However, we believe you can achieve a green, healthy lawn and be water-wise at the same time. The following tips will help you accomplish this:

- Water once every 4 to 5 days as a general rule of thumb. During rainy periods you may not need to water at all.
- Your lawn needs only one inch of water per week to stay healthy. Use one of our free rain gauges to help you determine how much natural rainfall occurred on your property and determine how much supplemental irrigation is necessary to achieve a total of one inch of water each week.
- Reduce lawn areas and replace with other types of drought-tolerant landscaping such as native trees, shrubs, natural groundcovers or perhaps a change to hardscape which employs the use of decorative stone in the overall landscape design.
- Water only when your lawn needs it and not on a set schedule. Upgrading your automatic irrigation system with soil moisture and rain cup sensors will help to assure you don’t inadvertently over water.
- Do not water every other day; this promotes shallow roots and disease. Watering once per week promotes a healthier lawn.
- For those with automatic sprinkler systems consider using a “smart” controller. These types of controllers use weather information to determine appropriate times to water.
- Install a rain barrel or cistern to collect rainwater for use as an alternative to your public water supply.
- Use drip irrigation technology for plant and shrub beds.

- Less evaporation occurs when watering early in the morning before 10:00 a.m. making your irrigation more effective.
- Plant new lawns in early spring or late summer when the days are warm, the evenings are cool and rain events are more prevalent. Planting during the heat of the summer will require excessive amounts of water and is not conducive to promoting the deep root structure necessary for the longevity of your plantings.
- Cut your lawn no less than 2 inches long during the heat of the summer. This allows the grass to shade itself and less moisture is lost to evaporation. Allow your grass to go dormant during the peak of summer. This is a natural part of its life cycle. It will turn green again as precipitation increases towards the end of summer into the fall.

Odd/Even Outdoor Water Use - Do I Need To Water Every Other Day?

No!! Because this subject has often been purported to be misunderstood, we will attempt to clarify some of the common concerns our customers have brought to our attention:

Kent County Water Authority implemented a year round Odd/Even Outdoor Water Use Program several years ago. The program was designed as a supply equalization measure to mitigate spikes in maximum day demand that were occurring when the majority of customers would water on the same day, or multiple days throughout the week. The program allows odd-numbered addresses to water on odd-numbered calendar days and even-numbered addresses to water on even-numbered calendar days and has shown promise in the reduction of significant peaks in daily water use during the summer months.

This program has been effective in spreading out peak demand, but many customers unfortunately feel that they must essentially water every other day. The end result of this interpretation is that much more water may be used than actually necessary during the summer months. While watering on an odd/even basis is allowed by our Rules and regulations, it is not always necessary because of weather related influences such as rain.

Rain Barrels Save Money And Resources

Rain barrels are a conservation initiative by which containers are used to collect rainwater from the roof of your house or garage. They are very simple to set up and install and provide a free source of water for watering plants and flowers that may be watered using a watering can.

Rainwater stored in rain barrels can be used in different ways. The water can be used outdoors for watering landscapes and gardens. The water can also be used for indoor house plants as well. You could even wash your car with this water!

Because rain is naturally soft water and devoid of minerals, chlorine, fluoride, and other chemicals associated with tap water, it can help to improve the health of your gardens, lawns, and trees. Of course, natural rainwater is what plants in the wild thrive on!

To learn more about rain barrels you can visit the URI Cooperative Extension Healthy Landscapes web site:

<http://www.uri.edu/ce/healthylandscapes/rainbsources.html>

Construction Projects Underway

Kent County Water Authority is continuously making improvements to the water system to better serve you. We have a busy schedule for 2010. Below is a summary of our major projects.

Read School House Road Tank - The project is complete with the exception of unresolved construction issues. The new tank has been in operation since last year and approximately 2000 customers have benefited from the improvement in service from this project

Flat River Road & Read School House Road Water Mains - This project is in the final stages of completion. Pavement issues concerning the occurrence of settlement along the utility trench are being investigated. A final repair plan is being developed and we expect the repair activities to commence in June 2010.

IFR 2006B/2007 - This project is approximately 90 percent complete. Pavement issues concerning the occurrence of settlement along the utility

trench in Cranston are being investigated. Final pavement activities in Cranston and West Warwick should occur June thru September.

IFR 2009A - This project is in the final phases and final pavement installation in the City of Warwick and Towns of Coventry, East Greenwich and West Warwick should occur June thru September.

Let us know how we're doing - We realize that these construction projects impact your daily lives. That is why we work with our contractors to minimize impacts to our customers. Nonetheless, there is always noise, dust, and traffic delays and/or detours associated with roadway construction projects.

If you have questions or concerns regarding any of our construction projects, please feel free to call our offices. We will be happy to provide information regarding a particular project or listen to your concerns. We are always looking for improved practices.

Additional Resources

For those of you that want to do additional research on drinking water related topics, the following web sites may be of interest to you:

<http://www.h2ouse.org/> Water saving tips, gardening tips, water budget calculator.

<http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/index.shtml> Water saving tips, additional links.

<http://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org> Alliance For Water Efficiency

<http://www.uri.edu/ce/factsheets/sheets/sustplant.html> URI Cooperative Extension List of Sustainable Trees & Shrubs

<http://www.uri.edu/ce/healthylandscapes/> URI Cooperative Extension - Healthy Landscapes

Be sure to check your mail. You should have received our new 2009 Water Quality Report. It contains valuable information about the quality of your water. Also, you can find our Wise Water Use Tips Brochure and our Household Water Audit Brochure at www.kentcountywater.org.

If you have any questions or comments please feel free to call our offices at 821-9300 between 8 am and 4 pm or email us at customerservice@kentcountywater.org

Watch for our next issue in August.