



E-NEWS
A Publication of KCWA
Issue No. 18
August 2010

Water Use and Efficiency Act Regulations Take Shape

The Kent County Water Authority was recently invited to a stakeholder's discussion regarding regulations currently under development by the Water Resources Board Water Allocation Committee. The draft regulations outline proposed statewide targets for water use of 65 gallons per person per day; provide methods for meeting targets and reporting requirements that will be used to enforce compliance for efficient residential use. Methods proposed to achieve targets for water use include but are not limited to such things as:

- Public education programs.
- Conservation rate structures that incrementally increase rates to those who use more than the 65 gallon per-capita target.
- Limiting outdoor landscape irrigation to once or twice per week.
- Limiting the area of irrigated landscape.
- Water reuse for irrigation and outside non-potable uses.
- Requirement to use only appliances that meet "Water Sense" standards.

The Water Resources Board Allocation Committee is quickly coming to closure on the final language for the future regulatory requirements that will invoke a departure from your current understanding and expectations of residential water use and future costs associated with its use. The Kent County Water Authority promotes the wise and efficient use of potable water and presents this information as the first step in the education process concerning

the future regulated use of the public water supply. Please contact the Rhode Island Water Resources Board regarding information related to the committee's efforts at 401-222-1450 or on their website <http://www.wrb.state.ri.us/index.htm>

Lead and Copper Testing

A few years ago Providence Water changed the chemistry in their treatment process to lower the pH. After this change it was discovered that Providence Water was unable to maintain the lead and copper levels detected in their monitoring tests below the allowable limits of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) drinking water standards. The RIDOH notified us that other water suppliers receiving water from the Providence Water Supply Board were also experiencing higher levels of lead and copper in their testing results and difficulties staying below the allowable drinking water standards for these constituents. Because of these indicators the RIDOH has discontinued our reduced monitoring program and are now requiring the Kent County Water Authority to conduct annual testing until further notice. We will be conducting this testing during August and September. We will keep our customers advised of our findings. Please contact the RIDOH office of drinking water quality (401) 222- 7740 for further information regarding this matter.

Shutoff for Nonpayment Continue to Rise

Over the past year 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 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 grace period. At that time, we can discuss options for payment and perhaps offer a 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.

Hydrant Painting Program

All of our public hydrants are checked annually, fully maintained and mechanically operational; however, like most things the paint system on many of the hydrants is showing the signs of deterioration due to constant exposure to the elements and winter deicing chemicals. The paint failure has contributed to unsightly appearance and the perception that system hydrants are not effectively maintained. Over the past few years we have directed our in-house resources towards repainting the system hydrants in an effort to improve public perceptions of service and the protection of the exterior steel surfaces of the hydrants. The current coating system maintenance process entails pressure washing in conjunction with a biodegradable cleaner, application of a two part penetrating primer sealer and application of an acrylic polysiloxane color coating. This coating system allows us to economically paint the hydrants without sandblast or power tool preparatory work which is very time consuming and expensive to accomplish in residential areas. The program recommences each year during the spring, summer and fall months when climatic conditions allow us to paint. Since implementation of this program in 2008, over 600 hydrants have been painted by our employees. This program will continue until all hydrants are completed and then move to a continuous touch up program from that point on. The estimated cost savings by using this in-house approach will exceed one million dollars.



Rhode Island Department of Health Changes Cross Connection Regulations

In response to political pressure the Cross Connection Control laws were changed to reflect a lesser concern for potential threats from existing single family homes. The Rhode Island Department of Health has changed its regulations in response to the law change to no longer mandate the installation of residential backflow prevention in existing single family homes. The RIDOH has left it up to each water supplier to determine the course of action concerning existing homes. The Kent County Water Authority believes that the protection of public health and the water supply is best served through the installation of containment backflow devices at every service connection. We will continue our efforts in this direction. Please visit our website to view the cross connection regulations and any applicable customer compliance requirements backflow prevention.

Working to Bring You Better Service

The Mishnock well field treatment plant design has received final approval from the Coventry Planning and Zoning Boards, Rhode Island Department of Health and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. We expect to bid this project in the next few months with construction commencement shortly thereafter. This is a significant milestone towards completion of this major capitol project that will allow us to bring the well supply back online in support our customer needs.

Odd/Even Outdoor Water Use Policy

As a reminder the KCWA Odd/Even watering policy remains in effect on a year round basis. The program was originally contemplated as a supply equalization measure during the summer months 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. A few years ago the Board adopted the year round implementation philosophy in its Rules and Regulations to take the guesswork out of when a customer could or could not use water outside. The current year round policy 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. Water saving kits and rain gauges are still available. Stop by and pick one up.

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 get 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. 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. Do not use the toilet for about 10 to 20 minutes. 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. Ordinary food dye will work fine for this.

Customer Billing and Contact Information

Each time you call our office you will now be asked to provide your current information. It is very important to keep your billing and phone contact information up to date. As customers change phone companies or phone numbers we are very often left out of the loop. This makes it very difficult to contact you should an emergency or other complicated billing matter arise. The quicker we can get in touch with you the faster these matters can be resolved. We are now looking at a system wide notification system that will automatically contact each of our customers should a contamination or other

malevolent acts occur. An up to date phone number in our database is in the best interest of everyone in these situations. Please contact any of our customer service representatives to quickly update any of your contact information or if it is more convenient insert the information with your next payment. We certainly appreciate your help.

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. Your patience is appreciated.

If you have questions or concerns regarding any of our construction projects, please feel free to call our offices at 821-9300 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. or e-mail us at customerservice@kentcountywater.org. We will be happy to provide information regarding a particular project or listen to your concerns. We are always looking for ways to improve our 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/cc/factsheets/sheets/sustplant.html> URI Cooperative Extension List of Sustainable Trees & Shrubs

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

Watch for our next issue in November.