



E-NEWS
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Local News - Water Use and Efficiency Act 2009

During the October 18, 2010 Rhode Island Water Resources Board meeting the Board voted 10 to 3 to approve draft rules based on the authorizing legislation. The motion was amended to move the draft regulations forward to public hearing, after legal review, with the inclusion of demand management plans and language referencing the Board's enforcement authority. The draft regulations require a reduction in customer use, capping it at 65 gallons per person per day. This included all inside and outside water uses such as lawn and garden watering, car washing, pool filling, clothes washing, cleaning, drinking, cooking and any other water use. Some of the interventions highlights include but are not limited to:

- The retrofit installation of conservation plumbing fixtures and "WaterSense" appliances.
- Limits on the size of landscapes that require irrigation, amount of water that can be used and times for operation of irrigation systems.
- Seasonal and inclining block rate structures that increase the cost of use as consumption increases.
- Establishment of new plantings restricted to spring and fall only.
- Public education and water audits.

Many of these initiatives appear to fall under the purview and enforcement authority of city and town building and zoning officials. Inevitably, use restrictions and rate structures will have to change to comply with the proposed regulations. Increased costs can be expected if customers exceed the proposed 65 gallons per person per day cap.

The Kent County Water Authority has its reservations regarding the current language in the proposed rules and impacts to our customers. Our opportunity to present our concerns is during the public hearing process. This is your opportunity as well to express your concerns and have an affect on the final regulations. If you wish to voice your concerns about the future impacts of these regulations you may do so by either contact your local and state representatives and/or participate in the public hearing process. No date has been established for the public hearing as of yet. Please call the office of the Water Resources Board at 401-222-1450 to be notified when that is to occur.

Shutoff For Nonpayment Continue to Rise

Over the past four billing period we have seen steady 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 30 day payment 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 charges associated with shutoff and turn on policy.

Outside Water Use and Leaks, It's To Late Once the Bill Arrives!

Lawn watering and leaks are the most common reason for high bill complaints. Overwatering, ignoring a dripping faucet or a running toilet has proven to be very costly. Many of us like to have green lush lawn or have noted a slow drip in our kitchen, bathroom or outside faucet. At that time we think, my property looks great or perhaps it's just a drip and 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 overlooked indicators of possible excessive outside water use or signs of leaks from worn and failing parts. Inevitably other priorities take precedence and we just do not realize the cumulative effects until the bill arrives.

Then 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 significant dollars to your quarterly water bill. Many times, our customers are shocked at how much water is used in the operation of their newly installed or improperly set irrigation system or from a dripping faucet or running toilet. In all cases water consumption returns to normal after the plumbing fixtures are repaired or the customer stops use of the irrigation system. If you have a dripping faucet or running toilet, fix it yourself or have it fixed. You will be glad you did.

The University of Rhode Island recommends no more than 1 inch per week of water is necessary to keep your lawn and garden healthy. If you have an irrigation system it should only be used to supplement what rainfall does not provide. The installation of soil moisture sensors, rain sensors and monitoring weekly rainfall are strongly recommended to keep your water use to a minimum.

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 also work fine for this test.

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's is more convenient insert the information with your next payment. We certainly appreciate your help.

Household Water Audit

How Low Can You Flow? On our website we have a brochure outlining easy steps to conduct a household water audit. A household water audit provides you with a complete understanding of the water use patterns in your household. This personal water use assessment involves simple steps to calculating water use and presents opportunities for saving water in your everyday activities.

The Household Water Audit Brochure is just one of the ways we assist our customers to conserve and save money in the process. Please visit our website and take full advantage of this easy saving process. (www.kentcountywater.org). While you are on the website don't forget to look at our Wise Water Use brochure and Consumer Confidence Water Quality Report.

Cold Weather Protection

The onset of colder weather means the possibility of frozen pipes and the potential for damage as things thaw. Drafts on un-insulated pipes and failure to drain the branch connection to outside hose bibs are common occurrences leading to leaks and flooding as pipes thaw. Preparation for the cold weather is the most important step to mitigation of these types of problems. Thoroughly inspect your plumbing and make sure there are no openings or faulty windows in the vicinity of where the plumbing runs along the foundation or outer walls of your home. Many products are available for "Do It Yourself" fix for these types of problem areas. Know where your meter isolation valve is and make sure it is in proper working order. This is your first response to isolate the water to your plumbing should a leak occur. Even if you have not experienced problems in the past, it's important to inspect your plumbing and perform annual preventative maintenance to protect your property from unforeseen changes as things age.

Hydrant Flushing and Annual Maintenance

In October KCWA conducted its biannual hydrant flushing program. This program is conducted to maintain system water quality, improve service to our

customers, and reveal any flow or hydrant operating problems. In previous years this type of maintenance was conducted at night and crew work hours had to be adjusted to perform this work. Based on the previous year's observations we decided to conduct the program during normal work hours. This proved to be very successful and actually reduced the number of labor hours required to perform the process. During November we will perform our annual hydrant maintenance and repair program. Each of our 2400 public hydrants will be checked for proper operation and any repairs accomplished in accordance with manufactures requirements.

Construction Projects Coming to a Close

KCWA is continuously making improvements to the water system to better serve you. We thank you for your patients during the ongoing construction effort. It is anticipated that all of our infrastructure projects will receive final overlay pavement by the close of 2010.

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.

Kent County Water Authority has a number of informatory and conservation brochures available to assist our customers with water related issues. Of particular interest may be our Wise Water Use Tips and Household Water Audit Brochures. These brochures provide valuable information that can help you to reduce your overall consumption and your bill. These brochures are also available online at www.kentcountywater.org.

Watch for our next issue in January.