



# Customer Pipeline

Emerald Coast Utilities Authority

## November 15: Sewer Averaging Begins

If you are an ECUA mainland residential wastewater customer, your annual sewer charges are based on the average number of gallons of water used\* in your household during the period known as “sewer averaging.” Sewer averaging, or Winter Quarter Averaging as it is called in some communities, is usually conducted during the winter months when residential water consumption is at its lowest.

**The ECUA’s sewer averaging period will begin with each residential customer’s first meter reading on or after November 15 (including ECUA sewer customers whose water service is received from another water provider). The length of your sewer averaging period is 90 days.**



**WATER WASTED DUE TO LEAKS WILL AFFECT YOUR MONTHLY WATER AND SEWER CHARGES.**

Since your actual water consumption during this period will determine your sewer charge for the next twelve months, it is important to check all indoor and outdoor plumbing fixtures for leaks. Water wasted due to leaks will affect your monthly water and sewer charges. Most leaks are easy to identify but sometimes, it takes a little creativity to track them down.

You can confirm a suspected leak in your toilet’s plumbing by putting several drops of food coloring in your toilet tank. Wait 15 minutes, and if the colored water shows up in the bowl, there is a leak in the tank. Check the toilet’s stopper ball for wear by removing the toilet lid, flushing the toilet, and rubbing the bottom of the stopper with your finger. If the rubber rubs off or crumbles, it is time to replace the stopper.

Finally, **you need to lubricate, adjust or replace the flush handle if you have to jiggle it to stop the water from running after you flush.** The “stuck” handle may be causing the stopper to stay open, allowing water to flow into the bowl. Check out more ways to save on your water and sewer bill in the right-hand side bar on this page.

\*Note: If you have a separate irrigation meter, the water used through the irrigation meter is not included in the sewer averaging calculation

## Reduce Water Usage: Save, Save, Save

Here are some other ideas to keep in mind for reducing water usage during the sewer averaging period and throughout the year:

- Water the lawn and garden only when necessary. In order to moderate some of the extreme peaks in usage, and to maintain a balanced system pressure and reduce the amount of wear on our pumping equipment, ECUA recommends that our customers irrigate between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 3:00 a.m., which is our optimum off-peak time.
- Make sure that outside spigots are not forgotten in the “on” position.
- Cut down on the frequency of at-home car washing, or use a commercial car wash.
- Make sure you have a full load before running the washer or dishwasher.
- Don’t let the water run while you brush your teeth or shave.

Hopefully, following some of these simple steps will help you save money and conserve water too! For other conservation tips, check out the “Live Green” tab on the ECUA website.

## Location, Location, Location!

When we're talking about garbage and recycling can placement, it's all about the location! Please place your can on the road, close to the curb, not on the sidewalk to prevent blocking access to the sidewalk. Be mindful also to place your sanitation can(s) at least 3 feet from your mailbox, nearby fire hydrants, or other garbage/recycling cans. The truck's mechanical arm needs a bit of clearance as it raises and lowers your can during the collection process.



## Who's the Latest Recycle Star?

The Recycle Star Program recognizes residential recycling customers who consistently practice positive, safe and clean recycling. The program includes recognition through a monthly award presented to an ECUA residential recycling customer determined by an impartial ECUA selection committee. Criteria for judging includes random inspection of individual recycle containers by ECUA recycling staff, and confirmation of compliance with recycling guidelines. We recognize the monthly winner with a certificate and a \$50 gift card from ECUA or one of our Recycle Star Program vendor partners.



Our July Recycle Star Program winner is Mr. David Musselman (pictured at right), who considers himself the "neighborhood recycling advocate," leading by example with his clean recycling.

Lt. Alex Collier (pictured at left) was selected as the Recycle Star Program's August winner. A Navy flight student from Seattle, Alex says he was raised to be a "recycler" and continues to work at keeping a clean local environment. Congratulations to David and Alex. Thanks for your enthusiasm, gentlemen!



## How You Can Avoid Estimated Water Use...

Every month, our meter readers collect your water consumption information from your water meter for billing purposes. Daily, ECUA's meter readers gather information remotely using radio frequencies from 4,000 to 8,000 meters (approximately 107,000 meters per month!). We strive to charge our customers accurately for the amount of water used, but if there is a problem with the transmission of usage data from the meter to the meter reader's laptop, our meter reader must access the meter and obtain a manual reading. If inclement weather prohibits a manual reading or if the meter is inaccessible, it is then necessary to estimate the usage information for billing purposes. To help us be as accurate as possible in the meter reading and billing of your account, please make sure that your meter box:

- has a one-foot clearance around it
- is free of debris
- isn't buried in concrete or dirt
- isn't obstructed by trees or plants, or vehicles
- isn't blocked by a locked gate

The ECUA is responsible for maintaining all elements of water meter boxes located at our customers' properties. These responsibilities include repairing the meter and the angle meter valve on the utility's side of the meter; removing dirt from boxes; and removing pests (small animals, snakes, and insects such as bees/wasps/hornets and their hives, ant colonies, large spider nests, etc.) from the meter box. Meter boxes present a darker, cooler, and enclosed setting that can be desirable sites in which pests and insects build their homes. Should you need to access the meter, please use extreme caution. Wear gloves and protective clothing when removing meter box lids due to the hazards associated with the presence of these pests and small animals. It is also advisable to probe the area after opening, with an elongated stick or screwdriver, to assure the box is clear. Caution is key!

The ECUA maintains the water service from the well source to the water main in the street, and to the meter box, including repairing and/or replacing the actual meter box and lid when necessary. The customer is responsible for maintaining all plumbing on the property on the customer-side of the meter box, including the customer's valve.