



# Customer Pipeline

**Emerald Coast Utilities Authority**

## ECUA Service Line Verification Project and Upcoming Changes to EPA's Lead and Copper Rule: What You Need to Know

Last month, we informed you about our Asset Management Program, which is central to our commitment to providing exceptional service and maintaining the integrity of our water utility system. Through our Service Line Verification Project, we are supporting the asset management program and addressing upcoming changes to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) section of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) that take effect on October 16, 2024. By strategically managing our assets, we can enhance operational efficiency, proactively address potential challenges, and continue delivering the high-quality service you expect and deserve.

This month, we would like to expand on these significant updates to the LCR, which will impact water utilities across the country and usher in new measures designed to protect public health and further minimize the risk of lead in drinking water. As your water utility, we want to keep you informed about how these changes might affect you and the steps we are taking to safeguard our community.

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## 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 and residents are typically not watering lawns, filling up swimming pools or washing cars.



**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.**

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**\*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.

## Sewer Averaging Begins, *Cont'd.*

### 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.

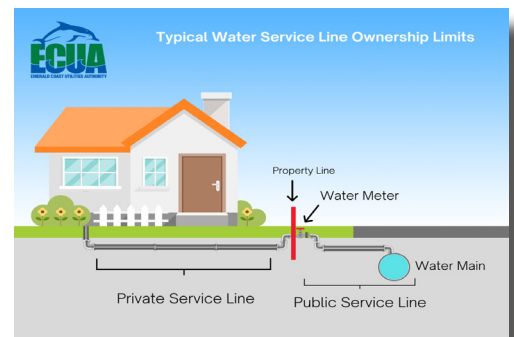
You can confirm a suspected leak in your toilet's plumbing by putting several drops of food coloring in your toilet tank. Wait 15 minutes, and if the colored water shows up in the bowl, there is a leak in the tank. Check the toilet's stopper ball for wear by removing the toilet lid, flushing the toilet, 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 sidebar of the front page.



## Service Line Verification Project, *Cont'd.*

The updated rule aims to reduce the potential presence of lead in drinking water, focusing on minimizing exposure from household plumbing. It's important to note that lead in drinking water typically does not come from the source water itself. Instead, lead can leach into drinking water from lead-containing plumbing materials, including service lines that connect homes to the water main.

To comply with these new regulations and to ensure the safety of your drinking water, we are undertaking a comprehensive assessment of all service lines within our system. Our goal is to verify and document the material composition of these lines to identify any potential sources of lead. This process involves inspecting and classifying both the public and private portions of the service lines throughout our service area.



Over the next several months, we will continue this evaluation and update our findings on a dedicated map dashboard on our website. The LeadCAST™ map is an interactive tool that will launch on our website in mid-October and, if your address has been verified, will allow you to check the material type of the service line at your address. Typically, service lines can be made of plastic, brass, copper, cast iron, flexible iron, lead, or galvanized steel.

If the material of your service line has not yet been identified (as we are in the process of verifying over 102,000 service lines), or if it is determined to be composed of lead (thus far, all findings have been satisfactory), you will receive a notification letter from us. This letter will provide detailed information on the effects of lead, potential health risks, and practical steps you can take to mitigate any potential exposure. Our goal is to keep you fully informed and help you take proactive measures to ensure your drinking water remains safe.

We are committed to transparency and will keep our website updated with the latest information as we progress with this important work. Your health and safety are our top priorities, and we appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we strive for full compliance with the new EPA Lead and Copper Rule guidance.

For any questions, you are encouraged to contact our Service Line Verification team via email at [mywatersvc@ecua.fl.gov](mailto:mywatersvc@ecua.fl.gov), by calling 850-969-3335, or visit our website for more details (look for the Water Service Line Verification Project under the Live Green Tab).