



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 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.

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.

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

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 or on our website at www.ecua.fl.gov/live-green/water-conservation-tips.

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.

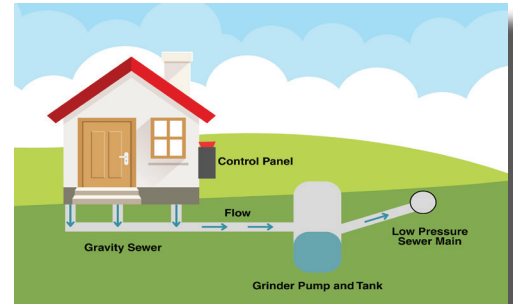
***Note: If you have a separate irrigation meter, the water used through the irrigation meter is not included in the sewer averaging calculation.**

Grinder Pumps: What You Need to Know

Some homes in our service area are equipped with grinder pumps, an important part of low-pressure sewer systems. If your property has one, it's essential to understand how it works and how to keep it in good shape.

Why Do Some Homes Need Grinder Pumps?

Unlike traditional gravity sewer systems that rely on the natural slope of land to move wastewater, a low-pressure sewer system uses pumps to push wastewater uphill or across flat terrain. Grinder pumps are installed at homes that are below the level of the main sewer line or too far away to rely on gravity alone. The pump grinds household wastewater, similar to a garbage disposal, and moves it through a small-diameter pipe to the public sewer main. Without the pump, sewage from your home wouldn't be able to reach the public system.



Who Is Responsible?

Grinder pumps and the private sewer service line (from your home to your property line) are owned and maintained by the property owner. That means it's up to you to make sure your system is working properly and to schedule any necessary maintenance or repairs. Here are some tips on caring for your grinder pump to keep it running smoothly:

- Avoid flushing non-flushable items. Wipes (even "flushable" ones), feminine hygiene products, and other debris can clog or damage the pump.
- Don't pour excess fats, oils and grease (that includes milk!) down the drain.
- Rinse out the inside of your grinder pump's tank once or twice a year to flush grease or other solids out of the tank.
- Grinder pumps rely on electricity and our area is prone to power outages during and after storms and so it's worth considering a standby generator as part of a Hurricane Preparedness Plan. If the power goes out, limit water use until power is restored.
- Your grinder pump is essentially an appliance and each one has different features and maintenance requirements depending on the manufacturer. It is important that you coordinate with your installer or plumber to understand what these maintenance requirements are and how frequently they must be completed.
- Don't plant trees or shrubs near the pump station. Roots can damage pipes and make access for maintenance difficult.

Grinder pumps are a vital part of your home's wastewater system. With a little care and attention, you can avoid costly repairs and ensure your system works reliably for years to come.



Recycling: A Little Effort Goes a Long Way

We get that recycling can be confusing. To make it easier, we like to focus on the Core Four: Mixed Paper & Cardboard, Metal food & Beverage Cans, Plastics 1 & 2, and Glass Jars & Bottles. A little effort goes a long way to making a BIG difference.

Remember, ECUA's recycling program is 100% voluntary. If it's not for you, that's OK too! We will swap your recycling can for a regular garbage can, free of charge. Just contact Customer Service at (850) 476-0480 or by email: customer.service@ecua.fl.gov

